H.R. 2210, THE "SCHOOL READINESS ACT OF 2003"

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON EDUCATION REFORM

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED EIGHTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

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HEARING ON: H.R. 2210,

THE "SCHOOL READINESS ACT OF 2003"

TUESDAY, JUNE 3, 2003

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SUBCOMMITTEE ON EDUCATION REFORM

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE

WASHINGTON, D.C.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 10:05 a.m. Room 2175, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Mike Castle [Chairman of the Subcommittee] presiding.

Present: Representatives Osborne, Ehlers, Biggert, Platts, Musgrave, Woolsey, Davis of California, Davis of Illinois, Grijalva, Kind, Kucinich, Van Hollen, and Majette.

Also Present: Representatives Mica, Murphy, Burns, Isakson, and Payne.

Staff Present: Julian Baer, Legislative Assistant; Amanda Farris, Professional Staff Member; Kevin Frank, Professional Staff Member; Parker Hamilton, Communications Coordinator; Kate Houston, Professional Staff Member; Alexa Marrero, Press Secretary; Deborah L. Samantar, Committee Clerk/Intern Coordinator; Dave Schnittger, Communications Director; Mark Zuckerman, Minority General Counsel; Ruth Friedman, Minority Legislative Associate/Education; Ricardo Martinez, Minority Legislative Associate/Education; Joe Novotny, Minority Staff Assistant/Labor; and Lynda Theil, Minority Legislative Associate/Education.

OPENING STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN MICHAEL N. CASTLE, SUBCOMMITTEE ON EDUCATION REFORM, COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE, U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Chairman Castle. A quorum being present, The Committee on Education and the Workforce will come to order.

We are meeting today to hear testimony on H.R. 2210, the School Readiness Act of 2003. Under committee rule 12(b), opening statements are limited to the chairman and ranking minority member of the subcommittee. Therefore, for other members who have statements, they may be included in the hearing record.

With that I ask unanimous consent for the hearing record to remain open 14 days to allow members' statements and other extraneous material referenced in the hearing to be submitted in the official hearing record.

Without objection so ordered.

Good morning. Thank you to all for joining us today for our second hearing to discuss the impact of the Head Start program in preparing disadvantaged children for school. Since our last hearing, several of my colleagues and I introduced H.R. 2210, the *School Readiness Act of 2003*, which reauthorizes the Head Start Program for the next 5 years.

The School Readiness Act of 2003 builds upon the reforms of previous reauthorizations of Head Start, as well as the recommendations of President Bush. H.R. 2210 sends a clear signal that every child, regardless of economic status, should have the best chance possible to succeed.

We all can agree on the need for Head Start and its astounding success, but we must also recognize that Head Start can produce even greater results for children. Students who attend Head Start programs start school more prepared than those with similar backgrounds who do not attend Head Start. However, Head Start students continue to enter kindergarten well below national norms in school readiness. By moving to close this school readiness gap, the *School Readiness Act* will improve results for almost a million Head Start students across the Nation.

Under this bill, Head Start children will have a greater opportunity to enter school with demonstrated pre-reading, language, and pre-mathematics skills, as well as the benefits from the nutritional and health services that Head Start has always provided. Children's progress will be determined by using scientifically based, clear criteria that will enable parents and teachers to accurately view a child's development.

This bill also will require Head Start teachers to be more prepared to ensure young children are ready for school. By 2008, 50 percent of all Head Start teachers must have a baccalaureate degree, and after three years, no new teachers will be hired without an associate degree.

H.R. 2210 also improves the accountability of Head Start programs. As under current law, local grantees will be responsible for their use of the Federal funds, but unlike the present system, H.R. 2210 requires grantees to demonstrate results in order to maintain its guarantee privilege. In this legislation, recipients of Head Start grants will have to demonstrate that they have met program improvement goals in order to continue receiving federal Head Start dollars. Those who fail to meet those goals would first receive additional assistance to help them improve their program. This bill demonstrates our commitment to Head Start by authorizing a $202 million increase, making it a $6.87 billion program.

For some states, this bill will also provide the opportunity for increased integration of preschool programs with Head Start. This opportunity will only be available to States that have exhibited a substantial dedication to early childhood education and care through financial investment, the creation of statewide school readiness standards and professional development requirements for early childhood teachers. States that take advantage of this opportunity will be required to maintain their current levels of State funding, thus protecting Head Start from State budget cuts.

The State Demonstration Program was developed out of a recognition that the emergence of pre-kindergarten programs in many States are adding to the already existing patchwork of child care and preschool programs serving preschool children and their families. As a result, children in different programs are likely to receive varying levels of quality care, with different degrees of emphasis on cognitive development and school readiness. Further, Head Start, State Pre-K, and other preschool programs within a State often are duplicative. Through coordinating efforts to recruit children, developing State guidelines for care, aligning school readiness standards with K-12 goals and other activities, a State can leverage resources to spend funding more efficiently and also serve additional children better.

My home State of Delaware has recognized the positive impact coordination will have on children. Delaware's Early Childhood Assistance Program has not only adopted Head Start standards but also uses some of the current Head Start grantees to operate the program.

Through these and other improvements, H.R. 2210 will increase the likelihood of Head Start children starting kindergarten at the same level as their more advantaged peers.

While the introduction of the *School Readiness Act* is a good first step, I remind each of you that we are at the beginning, not the end of this important process to reauthorize the Head Start program. I look forward to working with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to improve this legislation as we move forward.

Today we will hear from experts who will help us to consider the merits of this legislation and ways in which it may be strengthened. Our witnesses' unique perspectives on Head Start will offer insights that will be tremendously helpful to the members of this committee as we work to improve this important piece of legislation. We look forward to their comments.

With that I yield to my colleague from California, Ms. Woolsey, for whatever opening statement she wishes to make.

WRITTEN OPENING STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN MICHAEL N. CASTLE, SUBCOMMITTEE ON EDUCATION REFORM, COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE, U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES – SEE APPENDIX A

OPENING STATEMENT OF RANKING MINORITY MEMBER LYNN WOOLSEY, SUBCOMMITTEE ON EDUCATION REFORM, COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE, U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Ms. Woolsey. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

It is good that we are having another opportunity to review Head Start this morning, particularly since your proposed legislation is before them, and we can all respond to that, H.R. 2210. And I am glad that we are not going immediately to a markup.

And, Mr. Chairman, I want to tell you that I am counting on you to ensure that we get a subcommittee markup before we go to full committee, because I think it is very important for the debate and for what we need to be talking to so that our country understands what we are talking about when we talk about changing Head Start significantly.

I have a number of concerns and questions about H.R. 2210, but my concerns are particularly about title II of the bill. But before I talk about those, I want to state for the record how very proud I am that one of my witnesses, one of our witnesses today is Helga Lemke, who is the Executive Director of Community Action Partnership of Sonoma County, which is part of the District that I represent in the Congress.

Ms. Lemke has been with Community Action Partnership since 1989. She has always been a well-informed and thoughtful resource for me on Head Start and many other community programs, and I know that this committee is going to benefit greatly from her testimony. I also know that, along with Helga Lemke, many others in this room share my concerns about Title II of H.R. 2210.

For nearly 40 years, the Head Start program has been the shining example of this Nation's commitment to a better life for low-income children. In fact, we have documented research that Head Start is keeping that commitment, preparing children in a variety of ways to succeed in school and in their lives. So I guess my most basic question is, why would we want to make the fundamental changes to Head Start that are included in title II of your bill, the changes that are going to cause such a great amount of concern to all the rest of us? What good reason could there be to turn Head Start funds and the responsibility for maintaining Head Start's current high quality and performance standards over to the States, particularly at the time when States are facing huge budget deficits; they are cutting back on their own childhood programs. Why would we want to give them this successful program? Part of that and part of title II would be the eligibility requirements for participating in the block grant demonstration. These requirements are so broad

that there isn't a single State that wouldn't be eligible right now without even taking a second look. Title II would be one huge super waiver of current Head Start law that will weaken and eventually, I believe, kill Head Start.

And, Mr. Chairman, I want to include in my statement a quote from Dr. Edward Zigler. He was quoted when he was asked about the Head Start block grant proposal, and for those who don't know who Dr. Zigler is, Edward Zigler was the father of Head Start. He was named by President Richard Nixon to be his Director of the Office of Child Development. Dr. Zigler is currently a professor of research at Yale University. And Dr. Zigler says only in part, "I see a waiving of standards in exchange for the promise that such standards will be instituted within 2 years, which is an astonishing approach to stewardship of Federal tax dollars. I have researched the question of whether or not States can do a better job of running Head Start. We compared State-run preschools with Head Start as it exists today and found Head Start a clear winner in almost every category." .

Mr. Chairman, I ask unanimous consent to include Dr. Zigler's complete statement into the record.

Chairman Castle. Without objection it will be included.

DOCUMENT SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD BY RANKING MINORITY MEMBER LYNN WOOLSEY: WRITTEN ARTICLE QUOTING DR. EDWARD ZIGLER – SEE APPENDIX B

Ms. Woolsey. So, Mr. Chairman, here is my question. Why are we dismantling a good program when indeed our efforts should be used to making this program available for every single eligible child in this country by full-funding Head Start? Why aren't we learning from the successes of most of the programs across this country and duplicating those successes throughout our Nation? Why aren't we looking at not protecting our Head Start workers by contracting out Head Start programs?

Mr. Chairman, we have a lot of work to do to keep this great program together and making it available for every child in this Nation that is eligible. Let us not ruin what is a good thing. And I yield back the remainder of my time.

WRITTEN OPENING STATEMENT OF RANKING MINORITY MEMBER LYNN WOOLSEY, SUBCOMMITTEE ON EDUCATION REFORM, COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE, U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES – SEE APPENDIX C

Chairman Castle. Thank you, Ms. Woolsey. Hopefully, we will get the answers to some of your questions today. Maybe we will not, but we will try.

We have a very distinguished panel of witnesses before us, and I thank all of you for coming today. I think we will go through the introduction of the witnesses. I will introduce some, and then Mr. Isakson will introduce some as well.

The first witness will be Ms. Amy Wilkins, who is a nationally recognized expert in early child education and education reform. As the Executive Director of the Trust for Early Education, she advocates for high quality, voluntary preschool for all 3 and 4-year-olds. Prior to being named director of TEE, Ms. Wilkins coordinated the Education Trust Policy, Governmental Affairs Research and Communication Office, where she advocated for standards-based K through 16 reform. Before her work at the Education Trust, Ms. Wilkins worked for the Children's Defense Fund, the nation's largest child advocacy organization on child care and Head Start issues.

Mr. Isakson will introduce Dr. Lawrence and Daphne Haley.

Mr. Isakson. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I commend you on H.R. 2210.

I appreciate the opportunity to sit in on the Subcommittee and introduce two people whom I will introduce together because they are a team. I think it would really be unfair to introduce one over the other because they are critical to Georgia's collaborative effort on early childhood development, Head Start, and our four-year-old Pre-K Program.

First is Dr. Robert Lawrence. Dr. Lawrence is the Assistant Director of the Office of School Readiness, but also runs and is the Director of Georgia's Head Start Collaboration Project. This project is critical to the very types of things you are talking about in terms of innovation in this legislation.

Daphne Haley runs the Georgia 4-year-old Pre-Kindergarten Division of the Georgia Office of School Readiness.

Mr. Chairman, in 1993 the State of Georgia, with the help of Zell Miller, who was then the Governor, now a Senator from Georgia, created through the funding of the lottery, the 4-year-old Pre-Kindergarten Program available to any eligible 4-year-old that chose to take it.

This coming year, 65,000 Georgia 4-year-olds will attend a Pre-K Program coordinated between public and private providers with about 53 percent being provided in the private sector, 47 percent in the public sector. All curriculum standards and coordination run through the Office of School Readiness in the 4-year-old Pre-Kindergarten Program, which I think is an excellent demonstration of how the public and the private providers can collaborate to meet the needs of a large number of Georgians that otherwise could not be met through one segment or the other. We in Georgia recognize that the key to leaving no child behind is making sure they get a head start when they have gotten a slow start. Through no fault of their own, some of our children come from very deprived and disadvantaged environments. The importance of allowing them at ages three, four, and five to receive the type of nurturing, the type of education, the type of instruction, the type of motivation, and the type of life examples to allow them to compete is the absolute goal of Georgia's Office of School Readiness, and I am very proud that the Committee, through no encouragement of mine I might add, which must mean they are best in the country, looked all over the country and found Dr. Lawrence and Daphne Haley to be here today. I am confident that the committee will benefit greatly from their testimony. I welcome them for being here, and I thank them for what they are doing for the children of Georgia.

Chairman Castle. Let me turn to Ms. Woolsey, who has already mentioned and discussed Ms. Lemke at length, to see if she has anything further to say.

Ms. Woolsey. Actually, yes. One thing I would like to say in our listening to Ms. Lemke, who is such a valuable part of our community at the Community Action Partnership of Sonoma County where she has been since 1989. I was elected in 1992, and immediately I knew that Helga Lemke was going to be one of my number one voices to listen to when it came to programs like Head Start and other community programs. She has a huge job in Sonoma County. And in looking at Ms. Lemke, I would like to add something that I think we should be very careful of when we are reviewing and reauthorizing Head Start, and that is that we not intimidate Head Start staff into believing that they cannot express their thoughts and opinions about the future of Head Start. And what makes me think of that is that who better than a person like Ms. Lemke and affiliates sitting there next to her, who better knows about this subject and about these programs, Mr. Chairman, than the people that work with them and are part of them day in and day out?

So I welcome Ms. Lemke, and I thank you for being open with us.

Chairman Castle. Thank you, Ms. Woolsey. I welcome you too, Ms. Lemke.

I will now go to the witnesses. I think you know the basic rules. You each have 5 minutes to make your presentation. Your written statements are all accepted for the record. You have little lights there. You have a green light, I believe, for 4 minutes; a yellow light for 1 minute and then it goes red. When you see red, start thinking about winding it down, as it will be helpful in this process. We will go in the same order which the introductions took place.

After you have testified, we will alternate from Republicans to Democrats asking questions for 5-minute segments, which include the questions and the answers. So, obviously, relatively direct answers to the questions would be helpful in that process.

With that, we will start with you Ms. Wilkins. Welcome.

STATEMENT OF MS. AMY WILKINS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, TRUST FOR EARLY EDUCATION

Ms. Wilkins. Thank you. Good morning.

My name is Amy Wilkins. I am the Executive Director for Trust for Early Education. I greatly appreciate the Chairman's invitation to appear before you today, and I am deeply grateful for the many hours that staff and members on both sides of the aisle have spent working with us answering our questions, suggestions and concerns about this bill.

Head Start is a tremendous program. It has improved the lives of millions of children, and we are here today to talk about how to make it even better. Our work must be informed by the lessons learned since Head Start's inception. Through new and more sophisticated research, we

have learned that how much children know before they enter school has a major impact on their future academic success. Children who know their letters, shapes, and numbers before they enter kindergarten are stronger readers by the end of first grade than children who do not.

While Head Start is the centerpiece of our national Pre-K efforts, it is only one part. After 40 years, Head Start is still only serving 60 percent of the eligible children. Forty States, seeking to emulate Head Start's success, have established their own early education programs. These programs, which admittedly vary in quality, now serve more children, most of them poor, than does Head Start. We believe that the best step we can take to promote high quality, early learning is to increase the amount of formal education required of pre-kindergarten teachers.

The National Research Council of the National Academy of Sciences has recommended that Pre-K teachers hold BA degrees with specialized training in early education. Better educated teachers will not only help Head Start advance the intellectual development of children, but research indicates that teachers with BAs are better able to support positive social and emotional development than teachers with less formal education.

We applaud the requirement in this bill that half of all Head Start's lead teachers have BAs by 2008. However, if we hope to attract and retain well-educated teachers for Head Start, we must pay them competitive wages. Individuals with bachelor's degrees and specialized training in early education can earn about twice as much teaching in a public school kindergarten as they can in a Head Start program. The 60 percent quality set-aside in this bill is a down payment. Additional funding will be critical over the next 5 years to keep the quality promises that this bill makes. As powerful as we think the 50 percent BA requirement in this bill is, we think that this Committee can make that requirement even more powerful next week when you mark up Title II of the *Higher Education Act* by allowing States to use Title II funds to improve the education of preschool teachers, as well as K-12 teachers.

Over the long-term, the only way to ensure that all children, but particularly low-income, children have access to high quality Pre-K is through a carefully planned State/Federal partnership. We share the view of the drafters of this bill that Head Start policy must begin to recognize the large and growing role of State Pre-K programs, but any Federal demonstration project must adhere to three key principles. One, such partnerships must not lead to an atrophy of Federal action on Pre-K. Indeed, the Federal Government's investment must grow and its policies must improve to leverage greater investment in quality improvement in the States. Two, demonstration projects must protect the interests of low-income children if not advance those interests. And, three, the demonstration must be crafted to yield reliable information in the short term to inform policy in the long run.

We appreciate the willingness of the Committee to listen to our suggestions regarding the Federal/State demonstration partnerships, and we would offer five recommendations for strengthening Title II based on these principles. Additional ideas about how to improve Title II are in my written testimony.

First, we believe that only those States that have a substantial Pre-K effort now should be allowed to apply for demonstration partnerships. Specifically, only States in which the State Pre-K

investment equals at least 75 percent of the funds the State receives from the Federal Government through Head Start should be allowed to apply.

Second, applications should be limited to those States that already have a BA requirement for their teachers or have an associate degree requirement and are willing to move to a 50 percent BA requirement by 2008 should be allowed to apply, and applications should be limited to those States that already have Pre-K learning standards aligned with their K-12 standards. States should submit plans with measurable annual goals for quality improvement and expansion.

Third, there should be a rigorous approval process that not only gives the Secretary authority and discretion but also provides some advice by a peer review panel.

Fourth, we are pleased that the Committee has included a maintenance of effort provision in Title II; however, Title II needs to be strengthened with provisions to ensure that the percentage of low-income children served not be reduced to ensure that as many children as possible receive two years rather than one year of Pre-K and that Federal funds now being used by States to support Pre-K programs not be reduced.

Finally, the bill recognizes the need for evaluation, but the evaluation should be strengthened with resources and deadlines. We understand that this bill represents only the beginning of a critical dialogue between Congress, the Administration, States and the many other stakeholders with an interest in the Head Start program. We look forward to working with all members of this Committee in the coming weeks and months to improve this legislation.

Thank you.

WRITTEN OPENING STATEMENT OF AMY WILKINS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, TRUST FOR EARLY EDUCATION – SEE APPENDIX D

Chairman Castle. Thank you, Ms. Wilkins for your interesting testimony. We will now turn to Dr. Lawrence.

STATEMENT OF DR. ROBERT LAWRENCE, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF COLLABORATIVE SERVICES, DIRECTOR OF HEAD START STATE COLLABORATION PROJECT, GEORGIA OFFICE OF SCHOOL READINESS

Dr. Lawrence. Thank you and good morning.

On behalf of the State of Georgia and the Georgia Office of School Readiness, I would like to thank the members of this Committee for the opportunity to provide testimony this morning on H.R. 2210, the *School Readiness Act of 2003*.

As a nationally recognized leader in the field of early care and education, our State is uniquely qualified to speak about issues related to the development and implementation of a comprehensive, high-quality preschool program for children and families. In addition, the excellent relationship that our office has developed with Georgia Head Start programs over the past 10 years gives us a historical perspective on the coordination of Federal and State funds for early care and education that we think can serve as a model for other States.

With that in mind, I would like to make three brief points this morning in my testimony. First and most importantly, I want to underscore the enormous contributions that Head Start programs have made on behalf of low-income children and families in Georgia over the past 35 plus years. Secondly, I want to provide examples to this Committee on how our lottery-funded Pre-K Program has collaborated with Head Start over the past 10 years; and lastly I want to speak about Title II of H.R. 2210 that authorizes the State Demonstration Program to allow a limited numbers of States the opportunity to integrate existing preschool programs with Head Start.

The Georgia Office of School Readiness has long recognized that Head Start's Program design serves as a model for all programs, whether they are Federal, State or locally funded, that target services to low-income preschool children and their families. By that I mean, the rigorous Head Start performance standards, the comprehensive services to children and families, including parent training and education and supportive social services, appropriate curricula that addresses each child's educational needs, and other activities that promote the social and emotional well-being of young children are all necessary ingredients to help ensure the positive development of children within the context of a supportive family environment. The Federal Government recognized from the inception of Head Start that these program design elements were critical to providing children from low-income families an opportunity to grow and develop in concert with children from more advantaged backgrounds. A large measure of the success our office has had with our Head Start partners over the past 10 years has been the result of our belief that the Head Start program model of services gives Georgia's low-income children and their families those opportunities that are necessary for success in school and in life.

As you may know, the Georgia lottery-funded program for 4-year-old children is recognized as one of the premier school readiness programs in the country. We recently celebrated our tenth anniversary of providing Pre-K services to all Georgia 4-year-old children. To date, we have served over 500,000 4-year-olds through the use of lottery funding. The model for the delivery of services in the Georgia Pre-K program closely parallels that of Head Start and includes the following elements: An educationally enriched and developmentally appropriate curriculum, a rigorous evaluation process, appropriate child/staff ratios, the requirement that each program is evaluated, and comprehensive training for all teachers and other support staff. The Office of School Readiness has had a unique opportunity over these past 10 years to design and implement a Pre-K program that our research tells us has met its goal of preparing children to enter school with the necessary cognitive, physical, social and emotional skills, and abilities to be successful. The support of our program from previous Governors Zell Miller and Roy Barnes, through our current Governor, Sonny Purdue, coupled with the support we received from all citizens of Georgia who have children in our program, has been instrumental in the success that we have enjoyed.

As a result of our shared vision and commitment to high quality programs for preschool children, the Office of School Readiness has in enjoyed a long and fruitful collaborative partnership with Head Start over the past 10 years. We have enjoyed our relationship, and we have done a number of very creative things like sharing training, or doing joint training together. We have used our lottery dollars to extend the Head Start day to provide wrap-around services for Head Start families. Those are just a few examples of what we have done with our Pre-K Program in support of our Head Start Program.

Lastly, I would like to comment very briefly on Title II of the *School Readiness Act of 2003* that addresses the concept of the State Demonstration Program. In Georgia, we recognize that the details of this innovative concept are still being worked out and that the success of any State Demonstration Program will rest in large measure on the combined efforts of the Head Start community and its State partners to design a plan that is acceptable to all parties. It is our opinion that no State Demonstration Program will be successful unless there is a true spirit of cooperation and collaboration between Head Start and its State partners.

Based on our historical relationship with Head Start, the success of our collaborative partnerships over 10 years and the visionary leadership of our current Governor, Georgia welcomes the opportunity, if it should present itself, to participate in State Demonstration Program, and I would like to ensure the Committee that if Georgia participates in the State demonstration program, we will adhere to four guiding principles. Number one, we are committed to being the best possible steward of the Federal funds that come to our State. Number two, we will continue to honor the legacy and philosophy of Head Start in the implementation of the program. Number three, we are committed to maintaining Head Start's rigorous standards, its services to children with disabilities, and its maintenance of effort. We are currently serving approximately 22,000 children. We assure this Committee and the Head Start community that we will maintain at least that level of effort. And lastly, we are committed to conducting a thorough and independent evaluation of this demonstration program to ensure its effectiveness.

In closing, I would like to thank the Committee and its membership for the opportunity to share, with each of you this morning, examples of the innovative partnerships that our office has developed with Head Start. In addition, we are thankful for the opportunity to express our support and respect for the work that Head Start has done on behalf of millions of low-income children and their families during its rich history.

Thank you.

WRITTEN STATEMENT OF DR. ROBERT LAWRENCE, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF COLLABORATIVE SERVICES, DIRECTOR OF HEAD START STATE COLLABORATION PROJECT, GEORGIA OFFICE OF SCHOOL READINESS – SEE APPENDIX E

Chairman Castle. Thank you Dr. Lawrence.

Ms. Haley, I understand you are going to answer questions, like a pinch hitter, if you will, when the time comes.

So we will now go to Ms. Lemke for her testimony.

STATEMENT OF HELGA LEMKE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, COMMUNITY ACTION PARTNERSHIP OF SONOMA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

Ms. Lemke. Good morning, Chairman Castle, ranking member Woolsey, and members of the Committee.

Thank you for offering me the opportunity to speak today on behalf of Head Start. I would like to begin my testimony with a story. Cori, a Head Start employee, first came to Head Start at a low point in her life. She was a single parent without a support system and with very little money. She had just completed a recovery program and was seeking to put her life back together. A local agency suggested Head Start. She enrolled her daughter and with some nervousness arrived at a neighborhood Head Start for the first day of the program. The Head Start teacher welcomed her, hugged her, and said, "We're so happy you and your daughter are here. We need parents like you."

This was the beginning of a new life for Cori. It was literally the first time in years that she felt needed, comfortable and good about herself and her life. Cori went on to volunteer and work for Head Start. She completed an AA degree because, as she says, "my goal was to give back to Head Start all they had given to me." Her current goal is to get a BA degree. In her application for a scholarship she wrote, "I am a single parent. I support my two children by myself both physically and financially. I believe that because I am their role model, by continuing my education it will show them that this is something I value."

For the last 14 years I have been Executive Director of Community Action Partnership of Sonoma County, a community action agency whose mission is to help low-income people become self-sufficient. We serve, among our other programs, 552 Head Start children and their families. Cori, whose story I just told you, is one of our program's shining successes. But she is only one of many.

Why is Head Start so successful? It is successful because of the way it is designed and administered. There are four key elements that contribute to the success of the Head Start program: Comprehensive services, collaboration, quality and accountability, and the insistence on continual improvement.

Let me make just a few comments about some of these elements. There is more detail in my written testimony.

Comprehensive services: Poverty is complicated. Limited education, inadequate health care, lack of support systems, low self-esteem, poor parenting skills, domestic violence, are only some of the issues that contribute to sustained poverty. That is why Head Start uses a comprehensive approach, emphasizing education, health, nutrition, social services to families, and

parent involvement.

Collaboration: Head Start is a model of collaboration in partnership. Our Head Start program has more than 50 formalized collaborative agreements with community organizations and is part of a school readiness initiative that our agency developed in partnership with local schools.

Quality and Accountability: A key characteristic of Head Start is its quality and accountability. As evidenced by its rigorous performance standards and annual program prescribed self-assessment in a triennial, weeklong monitoring by an independent group of evaluators. Assessment of children takes place three times a year using a standardized validated tool.

Continuing Improvement: More than any other program I work with, the hallmark of Head Start is emphasis on continuing improvement. Of course, there is always room for more improvement. It is especially important that we invest in teacher training and the teachers themselves, and you have indicated that some of that is in Title I of the bill we are talking about.

Head Start works. Head Start results are impressive. Let us build on the firm foundation we already have. We oppose the transfer of Head Start to the States, whether in the form of a 50-State block grant, an optional opt-in program, or any other configuration. Our concerns are as follows: One is, the importance of Head Start, as a national program cannot be overstated. The program was designed to ensure the same quality in every State in the country. This goal is just as important today, especially since only three States have adopted stringent quality standards equal to those of Head Start. Secondly, Head Start's strength lies in its performance standards that guarantee quality and comprehensive services. The language in Title II is vague. There are no guarantees, no requirements for performance standards, no enforcement mechanisms, and no specific minimum standards about classroom size, teacher-student ratio or teacher education. Thirdly, I come from California. We have an incredible $38 billion deficit. Cash-strapped States cannot be relied upon to maintain the quality and comprehensive services of Head Start. School budgets are being slashed in California and in our counties; some schools are even facing bankruptcy. The current bill, as I understand it, requires no financial commitments from State to make and keep this program a priority. It is also inevitable, in my opinion that if the program is turned over to the states and the Federal Government no longer has direct responsibility, Federal funding for the program will inevitably decline.

In conclusion, for nearly 40 years Head Start has been the first step on the path of educational achievement of America's neediest children and families. We support the goals for quality improvement and strengthened collaboration among programs that are stated in Title I and hope they are accompanied by adequate investment. Turning over Head Start to the States in the manner outlined in Title II, however, will only in our opinion serve to undermine the progress we have achieved and threaten our local program, as well as thousands like it around the country.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to offer my views.

WRITTEN STATEMENT OF HELGA LEMKE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, COMMUNITY ACTION PARTNERSHIP OF SONOMA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA – SEE APPENDIX F

Mr. Osborne. [Presiding.] I would like to thank the panel for being here today and appreciate it very much. And at this time we will engage in some questioning. Each member will have 5 minutes, and, hopefully, we can honor the clock.

I would like to begin with the questioning. The FACES study, Family And Child Experience Study, indicates that children generally enter Head Start at about the 21st percentile in terms of readiness to learn, and it also indicates that when they leave Head Start and enter kindergarten, oftimes, they are roughly at the 24th percentile. Sometimes if you look at raw scores, they may not have improved, maybe even have decreased.

Now, personally, I am a great fan of Head Start. I have visited Head Start programs, and I see some tremendous things happening, and yet we are trying to justify a $7 billion program to the taxpayers. First of all, I am wondering do you feel that the FACES study, and those figures it presented are in some way flawed? If they are accurate, obviously, they are somewhat alarming. Secondly, I think you have already addressed your ideas about what to do about improving Head Start, but I would like to get your thoughts as to what we would tell the average taxpayer as to why we should invest in Head Start, why we should increase funding and what we do about improving those numbers.

Ms. Wilkins, would you like to start and take a shot at that?

Ms. Wilkins. Yes. The FACES standard is probably about right. Head Start does narrow the school readiness gap between low-income kids that attend and more affluent kids when they enter kindergarten. It is absolutely true and Head Start has done a good job. It seems to us that the biggest difference between Head Start and programs that have a stronger gap-narrowing effect is the formal education level of the staff. The programs that we looked at like the Perry Preschool Program, the Abecedarian Program in North Carolina, the Chicago Child Parent Center all have staff with at least BA degrees. In order for Head Start to get as powerful results for low-income kids, we need to give them the very best teachers we can. Beyond the formal education, we need to couple that with ongoing, high quality professional development and the 60 percent quality set-aside that you guys have put into Title I. These requirements together with the BA requirement and the 60 percent set-aside, I think will boost the ability of teachers to help kids close the gap even more.

Mr. Osborne. So do you see some wide variance program to program when you measure improvement in readiness? You realize, overall, the 21 percent, 24 percent improvement is very slight. But I am assuming you are saying there are variances within the programs.

Ms. Wilkins. Between programs.

Mr. Osborne. Between programs.

Ms. Wilkins. Absolutely.

Mr. Osborne. You are saying that the number one issue, as far as you are concerned, would be teacher preparation?

Ms. Wilkins. Preparation, coupled with training. We know that high levels of formal education help. You need a good solid foundation to begin with, but then through the life of the instructor, you need to provide her, it is usually a her, with solid, ongoing professional development. If you do those things, we believe that you will see a real increase in Head Start's ability to get kids off to a strong start.

Mr. Osborne. Thank you.

Dr. Lawrence, do you have any reaction to my question?

Dr. Lawrence. Well, I would concur generally with what Ms. Wilkins said. I would just add a note of caution. Most States, which I am familiar with, are still struggling with exactly what we even mean by the concept of school readiness.

We are clear in Georgia what we are talking about, but I am not sure every State in this country has a consistent definition. So when we talk about school readiness indicators, I think we need to first look on a State-by-State basis and see what States define as school readiness.

Secondly, I think it is important that we understand not only the strengths of our programs, whether they are the Georgia Pre-K program or the Head Start program, but also understand their limitations as well. None of these programs are a magic bullet that can forever change the developmental life-course of a child. It is unusual when that happens and the studies that we hold up as model, as Ms. Wilkins mentioned, the Abecedarian Project and the Perry Preschool Project are not representative models of your normal Head Start program or your normal State-funded Pre-Kindergarten Program.

So I say in that regard, while I agree that the FACES study was a well-designed study, and the results, I think, are indicative by and large of what you would expect in a Head Start Program, research does not tell the whole story. And I think we just need to caution ourselves. It is important, but we also need to be aware of what our expectations for these programs should be.

Mr. Osborne. Thank you. I see that my time has expired.

Ms. Woolsey. Mr. Chairman, we would unanimously allow you to finish your questioning if you would like.

Mr. Osborne. All right. Ms. Lemke, would you care to respond to the question regarding the FACES study?

Ms. Lemke. Well, I think the comments that strike me the most in the FACES study are the ones that say Head Start children leave kindergarten ready to learn, and once they are in kindergarten, they make substantial progress in a number of areas including word knowledge, letter recognition, math skills, et cetera. The other point I would like to make is that the children who enter Head

Start face formidable barriers. Fifty percent of all Head Start parents earn less than $12,000 a year. Almost 28 percent of the children come from a home where English is not the primary language. In our case, we are approaching 60 percent. Twenty-five percent of the parents have not graduated from high school. When you look at those factors, I think, to me, the progress is remarkable, and it is an indication of the great need for the family support and the parent involvement components.

Mr. Osborne. Thank you. I certainly concur. Some of the language barriers are oftimes addressed within Head Start. I think that is certainly laudable.

So at this time, Ms. Woolsey, please go ahead with your questions.

Ms. Woolsey. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And we are clear that we weren't using my time for that.

Mr. Osborne. We understand.

Ms. Woolsey. Thank you very much. I want to go on record for everybody to know that I believe this Nation ought to have universal voluntary preschool for all kids, and I also want to congratulate Georgia for your Pre-K program and that is what I see as a universal program for kids that don't have particular needs from poor families that need to adjust, language, don't have parents that don't understand the education system in the first place. We still need Head Start. We will always need Head Start and Head Start programs. And I just want you to know that if we had universal preschool, that would not level the playing field, because we would still have kids in the preschool that were ahead of the kids that weren't, and we need to make sure that can happen. And so I just want people to know that that is how I think about this stuff.

Ms. Lemke, H.R. 2210, in our current economic situation, in our State and most States across this country, would put a lot of demands on the States that they don't have right now. How would they pay for the programs? What would happen with Head Start if quality improvements and expanding the number of children served and raising the education standards for our teachers in Head Start, certainly we should be able to do that, but we need to be able to pay them. That is all about funding, folks. What would happen to the current Head Start programs if we handed that over to Gray Davis?

Ms. Lemke. Well, that is a scary thought. Head Start as we know it, I have no doubt, will not continue if California would get the program. The pressures, the financial pressures in our State are simply too great. The language, as I have looked at it, in Title II, is very weak. The supplanting language does not give me any belief that the program would not be incredibly weakened. You could serve the same number of Head Start children but provide fewer services. There has only been general language about preserving the integrity of the program. There are no enforcement mechanisms, and I have no doubt that in California, when they cannot afford to pay for our existing schools, that they would not keep Head Start as it is.

Ms. Woolsey. Thank you.

Ms. Wilkins, there will be changes in Title II and with the States receiving the funds through block grants. How will they meet the requirements of 50 percent of Head Start teachers having bachelor's

degrees? Where does the funding come from, how do we decide what programs do not get funded because of that? I agree with you that it ought to happen, but let us be realistic. How will that happen?

Ms. Wilkins. Well, Congress needs to make the commitment to Head Start to provide the wages necessary to attract and retain well-qualified teachers for Head Start. It is simple as that. If we want a better program, we have got to pay for it. And we have estimated over the next 5 years to raise the salaries of the 50 percent of the Head Start teachers to salaries that are commensurate with what those same individuals with those same qualifications might earn if they were teaching kindergarten, it will cost about $2.2 billion. You have made a promise in this bill, and we hope that in out years of this bill, that this Congress finds the money to keep those promises.

Ms. Woolsey. So have you followed the President's initiative of Leave No Child Behind and how under-funded that is?

Ms. Wilkins. Yes we have.

Ms. Woolsey. Well, okay. But you are saying in the best of all worlds, that is how we would do it?

Ms. Wilkins. Right.

Ms. Woolsey. But what if we set that standard and we don't have the funding for it, we don't fund it? We do have the funding but.

Ms. Wilkins. I think I am more than disappointed, and, in fact, angry that the administration has not kept the promise it made in Leave No Child Behind. I think that Congress has to stay on the administration about providing that money, and I think if you make this promise of 50 percent BAs in 5 years, that Congress has to keep the promise to kids.

Ms. Woolsey. Thank you very much.

Mr. Osborne. Thank you, Ms. Woolsey. Mrs. Musgrave.

Mrs. Musgrave. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I had a question for Dr. Lawrence first. Can you talk a bit about the ways the public and private sectors can work together in improving early education, please?

Mr. Lawrence. I can turn to the model that we use in our State, in which the data was presented earlier in our testimony. 53 percent of our Pre-K Programs are funded in private for-profit centers, and then 40 percent in public centers. Because of this collaboration, we have designed a model that we think is a very useful and worthwhile initiative and a project that other States could look to. I think this gives us a nice balance in our State of different types of settings that gives parents choices that they can make. They want to send their child to a public school Pre-K Program or the want to send their child to a private for-profit childcare center. So I think that model works best for

us. It increases parental choice while assuring across the board that the standards are the same whether those children are in the Pre-K Program in the public schools or in the Pre-K Program in the private centers. This has worked well for us in our State.

But I do want to say something that I think is extremely important. When we speak about the successes that we have had in Georgia, we want to acknowledge two things. Number one, we have been very fortunate to have consistent leadership from our governors for the Georgia Pre-K Program and for the Head Start collaboration piece that we have spoken about this morning. Secondly, we have lottery funds that have been directly designated for the purpose of funding these preschool programs and they cannot be used for any other purpose. The lottery has maintained its integrity. It is above reproach, and so we are very fortunate to have a consistent funding stream. The lessons that we have learned in Georgia, in some ways, are unique only to Georgia. Frankly, I have concerns about Title II of this bill as it relates to the ability of other States to meet the rigorous standards of Head Start, to maintain the integrity, and philosophy of Head Start. So when I speak about our support of this part of the legislation, it is only because of those conditions that exist in Georgia that we think it would be successful for the reasons that I stated.

Mrs. Musgrave. Further, maybe this would be addressed to you also, Dr. Lawrence. Could you tell me about evidence that suggests when teachers have bachelor's degrees that the school readiness of those students is improved a great deal? Could you address that for me, please?

Dr. Lawrence. Well, if you do not mind, could I turn that over to my colleague in Pre-K, Ms. Haley and let her address that?

Mrs. Musgrave. Certainly. Thank you.

Ms. Haley. We have seen a great deal of research. I think NACI has research that shows the higher degree of the teacher, the better the outcomes for the children. Similarly, our own research in Georgia has shown that the higher the degree of the teacher, the better the outcomes of the children to the extent that we have even raised our credential level to a minimum of an associate's degree.

Mrs. Musgrave. Thank you.

Dr. Lawrence. We did that, if I may add a comment, in response to the reauthorization of Head Start in 1998. When the decision to reauthorize was made, we then made that policy decision in our State. So our efforts have closely paralleled in the area of professional development, as Ms. Wilkins has so eloquently spoken about. Our efforts in the State, for our State-funded Pre-K, have paralleled those of Head Start. This is another example we wish to leave with this Committee on how we tried to make these two programs work together in an appropriate way.

Mrs. Musgrave. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

Mr. Osborne. Thank you, Mrs. Musgrave. Ms. Majette.

Ms. Majette. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Good morning to all the panelists, and thank you for all of the hard work that you do in order to improve the lives of our children here in this country; And I have to say a particular thank you, it is really good to see Dr. Lawrence and Ms. Haley here; I want to thank you for the work that you do, and I hope you will continue to do in the State of Georgia.

I would like to follow up on what Dr. Lawrence and Ms. Haley were just talking about with respect to the issue of having more qualified teachers or better qualified teachers at the preschool level, because I think that that is a very important thing, but if you look at the funding stream and look at the funding that is available and the wages and salaries that are being paid at this point, we are going to really have to make some significant increases in order to get the caliber of teachers that we want and that we need and that, obviously, will really help to move our students along. So my comment is that if we are going to make these changes and make these requirements, then we are going to have to be committed, and the administration is going to have to be committed to directing the funding, in order to meet these needs. Clearly, at this point, we have States that are struggling with finding enough teachers to meet the needs, making sure that we have that, and, of course, you are aware that we have that challenge in Georgia. And so, I guess, to put it in the form of a question, what kind of assurances can we get that the administration will put the full force of its ability to move us in that direction? Is there anything that either or any of you can say to speak to that particular issue?

Ms. Wilkins. I do not think any of us here are in a position to speak on behalf of the Administration. It is absolutely critical to understand that if we hope for Head Start to do a better job of closing the school readiness gap between the low-income kids it serves and other kids, we have to provide Head Start with well-qualified teachers and provide them with ongoing training and education.

If the Administration says, as it said in January, that its goal is to improve the literacy skills of children attending Head Start, it has to put its money where its mouth is and fund teachers, who research shows, are able to not only help kids with their academic skills, but are better able to address the social and emotional needs of kids.

Dr. Lawrence. I would like to add to that in some ways, it is a double-edge sword. You alluded to this. As we continue to increase, and rightly so, standards for teachers in early care and education programs, we are looking at a dwindling pool of potential applicants and persons who have been working in our programs.

It is a dilemma in Georgia and I think in other States as well. That does not mean that we should not continue to do this. What we are just beginning in Georgia, that other States have already undertaken, is the development of a committee to study birth through 5 year-old certification for early care and education teachers. In our minds, that would raise the prestige of teaching position within early care and education programs, put it on the Professional Standards

Commission salary scale, and it would become a professionalized position, which in turn would increase salaries.

So we are doing the best we can in a very difficult environment. Difficulty recruiting and retaining highly qualified teachers is a problem that has no easy solution, regardless of the State.

Ms. Majette. Please continue if you would, Ms Haley.

Ms. Haley. I think we also need to set our expectations. We raised the bar beginning 3 years ago with 3 years' notice to no longer allow a CDA, child care development or CCP, child care professional, as a lead teacher credential. It was tough, and we believed it would never happen. We went from 650 CDAs last year to 4 this year. And there was a lot of pain, a lot of groaning, and they said it could not be done, but we held the bar. I think if we are going to have high expectations and high outcomes for our kids, we are going to have to hold high expectations for our teachers.

Ms. Majette. But, under Title II, a State would be able to combine Head Start funds with funds for other early childhood programs. If I am correct in understanding this, there is not any regard to the set-asides for training or any other purposes, and I see that as being a problem. If the administration or the administration's proposal would depend on the individual States and the Governors making it a priority, I suspect that there will be this shell game that would be played, and there really is not anything that would be able to be used as a stick with regard to that.

Ms. Wilkins. Ms. Majette, my organization is recommending to increase the bar for States participating by requiring that only States that already have a BA requirement for their preschool teachers or, like Georgia, has an AA requirement and would be willing to move to a BA requirement on the same time line that has been established by this bill for overall Head Start be allowed to participate.

You are right. As currently drafted, Title II does not ensure that children in States participating would have access to the kind of teachers that we know matter. We believe that participation in the demonstration project should be limited to States that have made a large financial commitment to Pre-K already, that have made a large commitment to high-quality staff, and that have made a commitment to Pre-Kindergarten standards along with their K-12 standards.

We really think that if you are going to do this demonstration, you can only do it in those States that are appropriate partners for the Federal Government. You know, not every State, very few States, as a matter of fact, are appropriate partners for the Federal Government in this enterprise.

We think it is important for this Committee to look at the criteria for States to enter into the partnership, because there are no guarantees that States who have not made a commitment to high-quality staff will do this unless the Committee sets a limit on it.

Ms. Lemke. Could I just add one statement? I certainly share your reservations in terms of how improved teacher qualifications would be funded.

There is one other point I would like to make here, and that is that in the long run, the primary educator for the child are the parents. That is one of the reasons that the parent component, the parent involvement piece, of Head Start is so critical. Our teachers spend a lot of time with parents who do not have the books in their home, working on the family literacy component, working with them to design simple activities that they can use when they go places with their children. For example, when a family goes to the grocery store, pointing out the names of a fruit can enhance the development of the child.

Obviously, I do not mean to suggest any kind of substitute for very good education in the preschool program or Head Start Program, but I do want to emphasize in working with poor families, it is very important to work with the parents so they can work with the kids. Thank you.

Ms. Majette. Thank you. I agree with you.

Chairman Castle. Thank you.
Mrs. Biggert.

Mrs. Biggert. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you, all of you, for being here.

I have a question, and I hope I do not have difficulty getting it across, but having worked in a Head Start Program a very long time ago, the first year it opened, as a volunteer, and then visiting Head Start programs this year and seeing how they have grown, and I thought it was good and full of potential. How it has been developed, the quality of teachers, the parent program, the ability for the children to have access to health care, the vision and hearing screenings, things that a lot of children in low-income families do not have, I think it is that has worked. I am from Illinois, and I think that we have had a lot of interaction between the Head Start and the school systems themselves, and it has been beneficial.

My concern is that whenever you talk about a program that seems to be to getting a lot bigger. It would be nice if 60 percent of low-income kids were in Head Start in the bringing them into a program where they might not have those services that are provided now. Will this dilute the Head Start Program?

The other thing that seems to have occurred, in discussion with others, are opponents that criticize the academics of Head Start even as the socialization, the school readiness, the parent involvement and all of those programs are doing well. There still seems to be some question about the academics in the Head Start Program. I would just like to know a little bit how you foresee if H.R. 2210 will affect the programs that are in existence.

Dr. Lawrence. I want to reconfirm what Ms. Wilkins said about the necessity of having very specific and strict criteria relative to States' participation in this demonstration program. I think that is going to be key, the stricter the better.

Secondly, as Ms. Wilkins mentioned, professional standards for teachers, how you are going to manage the funds, whatever criteria are necessary, they must be extremely strictly spelled out and very rigorous. In my estimation, you really want to exclude programs to the extent possible, exclude States to the extent possible, rather than include States in order to determine whether this demonstration can be a success.

Thirdly, I think the development of the State plan is going to be tremendously important, and I would recommend and feel more comfortable with some continued discussion about what that process looks like. The critical factors that are necessary to ensure that the development of a State plan is appropriate for both Head Start and the State.

I also believe that the spirit of collaboration, coordination, and cooperation is vital to the continued success of the Head Start Programs. I believe if you do that, develop strict criteria, and be more specific in the steps that are necessary to develop the State plan, you will have gone a long way in ensuring the integrity of the Head Start Program.

What will not happen, hopefully, is your concern that the program gets lost in the shuffle of a watered-down State Pre-K program or something like that, losing the effectiveness and the impact, the character and the integrity of Head Start.

That would be my recommendations to help address your concerns about the watering down of Head Start or the loss of the Head Start Program.

Ms. Lemke. Well, I think the performance standards that are in existence that contain over 200 indicators, which address every aspect of the Head Start Program, guarantee the quality of the program. There is no reference to those in Title II.

Mrs. Biggert. Thank you.

Ms. Wilkins. I guess I would just add to what the others have said, that in addition to having high standards for programs that enter, ensuring that there is a plan process that makes sense and ensures cooperation at the State level will be beneficial.

The other thing that needs to be done in this bill is the Secretary really does need to have some discretion and authority in granting applications. The way the language is currently drafted, any State that applies receives a grant. The Secretary should have the discretion to look at the various plans and determine what looks good and what does not. He should have the advice of outside experts who understand child development, who understand program administration, and who understand the evaluation process.

So, in addition to the views brought forth by the other panelists have said, I think that the Secretary really does need to have some authority to say yea or nay on the applications.

Mrs. Biggert. And there would be no problem with funding?

Ms. Wilkins. Well, there is always a problem with funding.

Mrs. Biggert. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Castle. Thank you.
Mr. Grijalva.

Mr. Grijalva. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just a couple of quick questions.

Dr. Lawrence, if I may, you mentioned in your presentation the advantage in Georgia, and that being the consistent funding stream via the lottery, and that funds pre-K and also higher education, if I am not mistaken.

Dr. Lawrence. That is correct. The Hope Scholarship Program.

Mr. Grijalva. Let us hope it never comes to pass, but let us say that there is a loss of interest in the lottery in Georgia, and that money goes down. Under current law, under current Head Start law, the shortfall funding in your pre-K program, you could not draw upon the Head Start funding, correct?

Dr. Lawrence. No, sir.

Mr. Grijalva. Under title II would that be a possibility then, to combine those two funds under one, as presented now, as what we have before us today? If it would become a State_Georgia opted in, became a State demonstration project or a block grant project, whatever you want to call it, those funds would then be mingled together, and then your State pre-K could then draw upon the Head Start allocation under what we have before us today?

Dr. Lawrence. Well, in all honesty we have not thought through that issue. Let me try to step carefully through your question.

We have not experienced a loss of revenue relative to our lottery funding, in the past year or so, two of our neighboring States have passed lotteries. They are not fully implemented yet, so we expect, over the course of time, that Georgia's growth in lottery revenues will at least slow down.

Mr. Grijalva. But the possibility exists that you could use Federal Head Start money under what we are presented with today, funds to help pay for the pre-K lottery program?

Mr. Lawrence. We would not do that, and it would not be part of the State plan. It is not part of our approach to the State Demonstration. So while that may be a possibility, it is extremely unlikely.

Mr. Grijalva. Well, pardon the hypothetical.

Dr. Lawrence. Well, even if it were hypothetical, I would tell you in all honesty that we would not combine the two funds.

Mr. Grijalva. On another issue, if I may, Dr. Lawrence, that has to do with 19 percent of the kids that_children that happen to come from farm worker and migrant families are served now by Head Start. I understand that is still in a separate category. Nevertheless in your State alone there has been a 93 percent increase in the Hispanic population from 1990 to 1998, and issues of children whose primary language is other than English, and issues of addressing those migrant programs, even as a separate category. I think there is in the act, in what we are seeing before_the singular lack of attention and focus on that primary language issue, which I think this bill needs to strengthen as it goes along. But how would you deal with that question in terms of that 19 percent of migrant children, and you have a lot of migrant children in your State, being people we are serving, and almost 80 percent are still not being addressed on that. Any response to that?

Dr. Lawrence. Let me ask Ms. Haley to respond.

Ms. Haley. Georgia's Pre-K program currently serves 40 percent low-income children receiving some sort of public assistance, showing we are a universal program.

We currently do not have that information. We have a new computer system, and next year we will be able to tell you English as a second language. We do not collect that information now. I do think our very strong early literacy program does a lot to deal with the children. We still have issues with parents, but we counter with a strong parent component that deals with those parents. Usually the kids are not the problem. The kids are going to learn English quickly. It is communicating with the parents. So we are addressing that in Pre-K. I do not see us taking that away.

Mr. Grijalva. I don't mean to focus on your program. Nationwide that is an absence of attention, particularly migrant and seasonal workers, and a real focus on the primary language other than English, period. But, if I may, the_Ms. Lemke, just_and this is my reading of it.

As I see what is before us, Title II seems to negate the efforts of improvement that are in Title I. Am I misreading that?

Ms. Lemke. That is my reading also. My understanding is Title I contains goals applied to all programs, but that if States chose to opt out and apply for Head Start funding, then Title I is no longer applicable.

Mr. Grijalva. Thank you. I don't have any further questions, just a comment, if I may, Mr. Chairman.

When we were doing IDEA, it was the opinion_the question came up of mandatory funding for special ed kids. It was the committee's feeling that_at that point from the Chairman that we shouldn't do mandatory funding, because we need to continue to have congressional oversight over these very vulnerable kids in this country, poor kids under Head Start.

We are giving up our oversight in title II to a very vulnerable group of kids, poor children whose parents didn't even get a tax cut this year. So I mention that inconsistency. Thank you.

Chairman Castle. Mr. Van Hollen.

Mr. Van Hollen. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also want to welcome all of the witnesses. I thank you for your testimony.

Dr. Lawrence, I want to commend you also on the progress you have made in the State of Georgia, and I took to heart your comment that looking around at the other States, and I share your concern, you do worry whether or not the level of quality that you have in the Georgia program could be replicated in the other States.

You have further said that you thought in order to protect against a loss of quality in the program, you would want very strict criteria and specific criteria, and really design a program so it is very difficult to get into, rather than easy to get into.

And my question is would one way to do that, since we do have these performance standards, very clear performance standards, that Ms. Lemke referred to already outlined as part of the Federal Head Start Program, why not require, at least as a minimum, I mean, the States to meet these performance standards as a condition of receiving any kind of block grant money?

Dr. Lawrence. I think a minimum performance standard is an excellent idea. I believe that has been the strength of the Head Start Program from its inception, the very foundation that has made it so successful. I think to alleviate and allay concerns about the watering down of Head Start, which are real, I feel requiring among those criteria for State participation, Head Start performance standards is an excellent idea.

Mr. Van Hollen. My next question is if we are going do that, in other words, if we are going to essentially say, as a condition of receiving these funds, you really have to preserve all of the quality and other standards that exist in the Head Start Program, why not keep the Head Start Program the way it is and allow States that want to go farther to work, you know, in some ways with them, to do additional things? But why_why adopt title II? Why not keep it at title I with the changes that have been proposed, and then, you know, work with States? States already have a fair amount of authority to work. Why not take that approach?

Dr. Lawrence. Well, I think the Head Start community has done that through the State collaboration projects over the past 10 or so years. I believe they have been very instrumental in most States by helping design and implement a State system of early care and education that includes Head Start programs. I feel there has been good progress made in that regard. In Georgia, we feel like that under the certain conditions that we have spoken about in Title II, and under certain criteria, that the opportunity to further design and implement a more efficient, cost-effective system of early care and education is the next step for us in the State of Georgia.

We enjoy a really excellent relationship with Head Start. We have moved in tandem over these past 10 years toward high-quality programs. I think that a demonstration, the opportunity to

conduct a demonstration under the conditions that we have said, would allow certain States to move a step ahead in crafting a seamless system of early care and education.

Mr. Van Hollen. My time is going to run out. So if I can ask you, what are the impediments in the existing Head Start law to Georgia doing what it wants to do, because if there are impediments, some of us would rather take the bullet approach and address those issues rather than have the wholesale changes that some of us are concerned with the vague language in title II that would open up there.

Dr. Lawrence. Well, I do not want to use the word "impediment," as I am careful in my choice of words. But one of the strengths of Head Start Program is its local autonomy, and in some instances that very strength becomes an impediment to collaboration and coordination, because local programs do not have to do that if they chose not to.

In our case there are certain programs in our State that for certain reasons, particular reasons, have isolated themselves, and they are not involved in communitywide planning and coordination of services. I believe the strength of Head Start programs is its local autonomy, and that is a good thing, but when you are designing a State system in which everybody in a particular way moves forward in unison under a set of standards in an organized system, you can make an argument, if you would like to, that everybody needs to move together toward that objective. In this case you do not have to do that under the current design of Head Start. You do not have to play ball with the Georgia Pre-K Program if you do not want to.

Mr. Van Hollen. Thank you.

Chairman Castle. Thank you, Mr. Van Hollen.
Mr. Davis.

Mr. Davis of Illinois. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. And I, too, want to thank all of the witnesses for coming to testify to share their experiences with us.

It seems to me that Head Start has been heralded as one of the most effective of all of the programs that grew out of the civil rights movement, grew out of the war on poverty, and part of the effectiveness has come as a result of their comprehensiveness; that is, as people got involved, as parents got involved, as communities got involved, as people got involved, they really liked what they were doing. I am saying they liked the idea of interacting around the development of their children.

I wouldn't consider myself any kind of an expert, but I have spent a lot of time around these kind of programs and this kind of activity, and it seems to me that people really look forward to whatever role, whatever part, whatever their niche was in them, and that then translated into children being enthused, learning, being engaged. I think the record sort of indicates much of that.

My question is if each one of us, just theoretically, was the most powerful, most influential person in the whole United States of America that could have some influence and impact on improving the program, what would you do? I mean, given the lay of the land, unemployment,

problems with finding a job, job loss, money going every direction, war, increases in poverty, 2.7 million people lost their jobs in the last couple of years, I mean, what would you do to improve the program if you just had the power and ability to do that?

Ms. Lemke. I would make sure that all children were eligible, that the funding was increased so that every eligible Head Start child could actually take advantage of the program. We are only serving a portion of the poor children who would be eligible if there was enough funding. I believe so strongly in this program that that would be my first priority.

Mr. Davis of Illinois. Thank you.
Ms. Haley.

Ms. Haley. I agree with that. I would also make sure that there were blended programs so that children from poor backgrounds would be able to be educated along with children who were not from those backgrounds. And pay the teachers. I would pay the teachers.

Dr. Lawrence. I think the intervention should occur much earlier in the life of a child and family. There is strong support in the Head Start community; it is my understanding that Head Start Programs be allowed to serve children birth through 5. Also, design the model for the Head Start Programs that is most appropriate for their community. I think that is a wise idea.

I think it is presumptuous of us to think that an intervention for 1 year at the age of 4 is going to have a lifetime of effect of a child's life. I think the earlier that we can intervene in the lives of particularly at-risk children and families with comprehensive services who sustain those services over multiple years, we are going to begin to see stronger benefits to the programs. And those benefits, I believe, would be sustained over a longer period of time.

Mr. Davis of Illinois. Thank you.

Ms. Wilkins. Since everybody who has spoke before me has made the program bigger and better, I would say what we need to do is get Head Start teachers in the programs with more formal, education and then pay them for that education. If you did all of the things all of the way up the line, you would have a pretty good program.

Mr. Davis of Illinois. Let me thank all of you, because I think if the committee listens to what you have said, you are saying we need to increase funding; make sure that the programs are blended so that children have an opportunity to interact with others whose lives may be a little bit different than theirs so that they learn how to live in this great big America; and we need to start earlier and begin at birth through 5; and make sure that our teachers are well trained and really know what they are doing, and that we have enough money to pay them.

That sounds like a real prescription for success. I hope that maybe the committee will follow that, Mr. Chairman. And I thank you very much.

Chairman Castle. Thank you, Mr. Davis.
Mrs. Davis.

Mrs. Davis of California. Thank you. I appreciate your responses. I think at the last hearing that we had, I know I asked the question as well about how can we make this better? What is missing? Is there something missing institutionally? Is there something missing in the training? And people did respond: We need to start much earlier. And I think that focus on Even Start, on Early Start, how we blend those.

And I guess part of my question then is are we addressing that in this legislation? How does title II, if we put that into the new legislation reauthorization, does that get us there any faster? Slower?

And I think my other question, too, if we are to start earlier, does that mean new funding, or does that necessarily mean a different use of the funding that we already have? The folks who were here before have suggested that it doesn't necessarily need new funding. I was having some difficulty trying to see how, in fact, we could do it without additional funding. Could you speak to that?

Dr. Lawrence. I will jump in, because this is a very good question. Some of your question we have really not worked out the details in Georgia. All of this is relatively new, so some of the level of detail that you are asking for we are not prepared to answer yet in Georgia. However, I will say that in what we think and how we look at this possibility of better coordination of our Head Start Program with our Pre-K Program, we see an opportunity to build on the strengths of both programs.

In some cases in our State currently, Pre-K serves only 4-year-old children. Head Start serves 3-, 4- and some 5-year-old children. In some instances there is competition for the 4-year-old child where, for whatever reason, Head Start Program is in competition with the 4-year-old Pre-K Program for that child. We see an opportunity, perhaps, to better coordinate that, build on the strengths of Head Start, intervene earlier in the life of a child, using Head Start funds.

Mrs. Davis of California. I guess the question would be does that take away from the maintenance of effort for those children who are in the Head Start Program today? Because, what I think we are really striving for here is not to take away from the existing program in its numbers and in its quality, and certainly in the training of teachers, we need to make that all better. We need to expand that. How do we get to the earlier piece, because that is so critical and we need to start planning for that?

Dr. Lawrence. We have not developed our plan. So we do not have the level of detail that you are asking for. I will go back to what I said earlier in my opening remarks. We are committed to maintenance of effort. We are not going to diminish or reduce the number of children and families that are currently being served by Head Start in our State.

How we design that program model I cannot really tell you, because we have not discussed it in detail, but we are committed not to reducing the maintenance of effort and building on the

strengths of both programs in our State. That is what I am speaking of.

Ms. Lemke. We have an early Head Start Program, and we operate it in partnership with a local school teenage mother program. This is very effective, because it is so important to get to those teenage mothers, as well as the infants, early.

I am concerned about the future of Early Head Start, because I think it is one of the best additions to the Head Start Program over the past few years. The proposed legislation is unclear to me because it sounds as though Early Head Start could stay with the Federal Government or could go to the States. What we are really excited about in our program is the continuity of the possibility of working with the child from infant stage through age 4 in Head Start.

So I do not have an answer to your question.

Mrs. Davis of California. Would that coordination be essential if, in looking at title II, that that would be another criteria that really ought to be there?

Ms. Lemke. Yes.

Ms. Wilkins. Can I pull back? Everyone on this panel has talked about the need to get to full funding for Head Start to serve the 3- and 4- year old. But even if we got the full funding for Head Start to serve the 3- and 4- year old, we would only be serving children below 100 percent of the poverty level.

There are another 1.5 million 3- and 4-year-olds in this country who are so poor by the time they get to kindergarten, the Federal Government will help pay for their lunches, yet denying them from Head Start. Through Early Head Start we are only serving a tiny percentage of the infants and toddlers, so the need for high-quality early childhood programs is just enormous.

As this Committee and Congress moves forward with this reauthorization, we believe it is necessary to think of ways to leverage greater State investment here. We are never going to serve all of the kids that we need to serve by only using the Federal level. While considering this legislation, this Committee needs to figure out how to get the States more involved with funding and how to lift the quality of the State programs. This is necessary to offer kids who qualify for the free and reduced price lunches. But there needs more money in the pot.

Mrs. Davis of California. Thank you.

If I may, Mr. Chairman, I know when I have met with Head Start people in the San Diego community, they are very frustrated with that as well, because they know that there are many families who are just barely there that could be served and would be well served, and our entire system would be well served if we could do that. Thank you.

Chairman Castle. Thank you, Mrs. Davis.

Mr. Payne has joined us. He is a member of the Full Committee. He is not a member of the Subcommittee. So we have gotten a waiver from the Speaker of the House of Representatives to allow him to ask questions, as confirmed by the President of the United States.

With that, we yield 5 minutes to Mr. Payne.

Mr. Payne. Thank you very much. Therefore, I am going to ask nice questions since I am given this opportunity. But I am certainly sorry that I missed the testimony.

But Head Start in general is a program that, you know, is being debated here. Many of us really feel that the program has been so good over the years, we really hate to see the tampering with it, and we hope that when the new proposals come up for the switch, and I understand it is going from the Health and Human Services to the Department of Education, that many of the amenities that Head Start has, dealing with nutrition, dealing with the total family, dealing with adult literacy, hopefully they can still be a part of the program.

I have a concern. When Governors get money through block grants, every State is having financial problems, and it seems to me that there may be an opportunity for some Governors, even my own, who is a good friend of mine, but I am worrying, to take the funds and offset some of the very, very dire economic problems that are being confronted by States and overall, I think, diluting the program. That is my concern, about a dilution of the program. And I just wondered, the high standards is something that we pride Head Start on, and I am wondering, what do you think about the block granting? I guess Georgia is kind of unique, but in general what would happen? Do you feel that the standards could remain as high, or do you think that it is going to be an opportunity to try to do much more with the same amount, which is_really in the long run perhaps might not give the same quality that we currently have?

Ms. Lemke. Well, the proposed legislation does not include performance standards, and my understanding is that there are only three States that have standards for their preschool that are equal in their stringency to the Head Start Program. So I would agree with your fears.

Mr. Payne. Okay.

Ms. Wilkins. I was just going to add that your mind should be a little at ease about your home State of New Jersey. While admittedly New Jersey is having a very, very tough economic time this year, Governor McGreevey asked for and got a $28 million increase for the New Jersey Pre-K Program. The New Jersey investment in Pre-K is 250 times what the Federal investment in Head Start is. So, in fact, more poor kids because of the Abbott decision in New Jersey are getting pre-K, through the Abbott districts, than are through Head Start.

And one of the nice collaborative things that have happened in New Jersey is that Abbott has higher educational requirements for its Pre-K teachers than New Jersey's Head Start does. Many Head Start teachers have taken advantage of the scholarships that have been offered through Abbott and gone on to get their BA degrees.

Abbott is an example and New Jersey is an example of a State that has a solid commitment to Pre-K that is coordinated well with Head Start; they have used State funds to improve the quality of instructors in the Head Start Program.

Mr. Payne. Right. Well, let me just say, as you know, it took 40 years for the Abbott case to work its way through. New Jersey has a unique State constitution that was written 3- or 400 years ago that said that every child is entitled to a thorough and efficient education, and because of the inadequacies of the funding, for example, Camden was funded at about 50 percent of what Milburn was funded at years ago, and so the Abbott decision and the Cahill case said that you had to have equal funding.

But my fears are still well founded, because you may know that the Governor has asked the Supreme Court to relieve the State from Abbott, and he has asked that we use all sort of deliberate speed in moving it because of the funding problems. So my fears are well founded, because they are in court asking the State supreme court to relieve them of the Abbott decision. The funding for schools has been done through a bonding issue under the former Governor, but the other parts of Abbott are now being asked for relief for the State to reduce what the Court said it should do. So we are very concerned.

But I just commend Georgia on the Hope Scholarship, the whole kind of thing, although I do understand with the Hope Scholarship, which is not in your area, but many Georgia wealthy persons or well-off people who might have gone out of State are going to the top Georgia universities. Therefore, many people are benefiting from the Hope Scholarship, which in the long run is really taking away from other students by virtue of the fact that you must maintain a B average in the university, and many students from poorer communities might get in, but are unable to maintain that. But others who would maybe go to Yale or Harvard are going to Georgia Tech and others. And so there is a reverse effect on the Hope Scholarship Program. I hope they can amend that.

Chairman Castle. Thank you, Mr. Payne.

We have another participant. Mr. Murphy of Pennsylvania is here. If it took the Speaker and the President to have Mr. Payne testify, Mr. Murphy is not even a member of the Committee, so it will take an act of God, but we have had it granted. So, Mr. Murphy, we yield 5 minutes.

Mr. Murphy. Given that introduction, Mr. Chairman, I should thank you and God then for allowing me this.

But it is an honor to be here, and I appreciate this. For the members of the Committee, my career is as a child psychologist, and I have worked extensively in the areas of early childhood development over the years, particularly in the aspects of cognitive development in young children, although many aspects of Head Start are best seen as not only cognitive when we are dealing with impoverished children who really benefit socially and emotionally, as well as their families. Nonetheless, I would like to focus a couple of my questions on some of the cognitive experiences these children have.

As you know, early childhood education has a tremendous impact upon neurological development in young children. Effects are long lasting and can be measured by a number of tools. Certainly we know also their vocabulary, their early reading skills are also tremendously affected. And although some research has, I think oftentimes skewed research or not very well done research has suggested that the gains do not last forever. Nonetheless, I think they are substantial gains.

But I want to talk about how we measure that not on the bailiwick of this bill, it probably being more regulatory. Ms. Wilkins or whoever might want to respond to this, what do you see as the more effective ways that States and local programs can assess development in these children as pretest, post-test so that we can clearly monitor not only what their needs are or how they are doing long term?

I know some Head Starts use screening tests such as the Denver Developmental Screening Test, which in my experience is not very valuable for such children in terms of identifying some of their needs. I wonder if you have any other thoughts on what can and should be done to give people latitude to find good measures and how we can measure that.

Ms. Wilkins. I am not an assessment expert, so I am going to defer to Dr. Lawrence and Ms. Haley on this one.

Dr. Lawrence. Well, good question. To the best of my ability, I will answer your question by first saying that I think it is important, when talking about the effects of early childhood programs, to first determine what the purpose of the program is. As you well know, the purpose of the program will then guide what instruments are used to measure child outcomes. For example, if a program's purpose is to promote health, social, emotional competence of young children, then measuring the effectiveness of the program by using a battery of cognitive instruments is not necessarily that appropriate.

Even though we are still struggling in our State with our Pre-K program and certainly in Head Start nationally, we need to define exactly what we expect children to learn and accomplish and look like when they leave our programs.

In Georgia what we have done is develop our definition of school readiness, because we believe that the purpose of our Pre-K Program, and the purpose of Head Start for that matter, at least we believe that in our State, is to prepare children with the necessary skills to be successful as they enter school. If, in fact, by their participation in the Georgia Pre-K Program and their participation in Head Start, that their test scores, reading scores increase in the third grade, so be it. But that is not what we are focused on.

So given that, and I am not dodging your question, I think you have asked specifically what cognitive measures should be used, and I really am not at liberty to or really can speak to that eloquently. But I think that a battery of tests that measures the full range of development of children in all domains, the motor, language, social and emotional are needed. Being a child psychologist, I am sure you understand the importance of social and emotional development relative to cognitive development. The two are intertwined, and directly correlate with a child's performance in school. If the purpose of the program is to enhance all developmental domains of

young children in an early intervention program, then a battery of instruments should be selected that appropriately measure all of those domains and do not necessarily focus in on cognitive development.

Ms. Haley. All of that being said, it should also be noted that young children make very poor test subjects. Children do not understand prospects testing. The skill they do very well today may not be there tomorrow.

Mr. Murphy. Well, that is why they need good psychologists.

Ms. Haley. Okay. We need a lot more money than we are planning on getting here. What they have today, what they know today, they are not going to have or know tomorrow. They are up and down. They do not understand how important this is. We have to be very cautious when we look at individual testing of children.

Mr. Murphy. Mr. Chairman, let me close by saying I applaud the Committee and the President for taking such an energetic lead on the Head Start Program. I know as one reviews research over time, one prevalent question that deals with young children how do you assess what can be measured with reliability and validity. Often these are glossed over with cultural differences in terms of what the family's exposure has been to the child in terms of those things, are probably many of the factors involved when one is trying to predict outcome or evaluate outcome over the long run.

Nonetheless, certainly I hope that the regulatory issues and other information are considered by this Committee are able to provide us with what we need because I believe the data is there. Sometimes it is a matter of the government making sure the right foundation is set to find the information, I have certainly seen time and time again, as I am sure you have, the value of early childhood education is almost immeasurable at times, but clearly there.

I thank the Committee for allowing me to sit up here and join you. Thank you.

Chairman Castle. I also recognize that Mr. Mica of Florida has joined us, and we appreciate that also.

Before we proceed, I believe that the order of business will be as follows. I have not asked my questions, so I am going to ask a round of questions, and then we will have brief closings. We are not going to have a second round of questioning due to time constraints, the extra witnesses we have had today, and the thoroughness of testimonies presented by those witnesses.

I would like to make a preliminary statement before I ask questions about where we are legislatively on this. We do intend to move forward with this legislation. We do intend to go through Subcommittee and Full Committee and probably the floor of the House of Representatives, all of which can happen in fairly rapid order.

This legislation, as a lot of legislation in this Committee, is subject to change. I interpret this as improvement, based on what we hear by witnesses and what we learn. So we could have

substitutes and rewrites of this as we go forward with the actual markup, and then taking it to the floor of the House of Representatives.

If we took a vote on this, I think we would have pretty much yes votes for the changes in Title I, and more no votes than yes or roughly even on the Title II, which covers the coordination with the States, which has been really, the essence of this hearing today.

I would like to explain my own views on this. I would like to clarify that changing departments. I believe three Presidents have suggested changing from Health and Human Services to Education. This has never happened, and it is not in our legislation.

The component about moving this to the States and the coordination with the States, similar to what we have heard testified by the witnesses from Georgia, is in the legislation. We clearly are going to look at some of that language. As one who had an opportunity for 8 wonderful years to be Governor of my little State of Delaware, I feel strongly about the issue.

I feel strongly that we can do even more to help children. I was very involved in the First 60 Months Program; a program similar to those you have spoken about today, one focused on coordinating with kids.

I think Head Start is a wonderful program. I would not denigrate it in any way. But I do look at charts, which unfortunately you cannot see and maybe that is fortunate for me. These are charts from 1997 and 2000 and I would like to have them prepared a little bit differently for the future. They are responsible for showing knowledge and skill areas for these young children, looking at children entering and leaving Head Start. The average in the country is the 50th percentile, the average in Head Start in vocabulary, for example, was 16 percent when entering and 23 percent when losing. Letter recognition actually went down from 27 to 25 percent; early writing went from 16 to 23, and early mathematics from 17 to 19 percent.

What is unfair is the lack of precluding statistics, showing where these kids would be without Head Start. That is, those kids who are eligible for Head Start, but are not in this. So I think the statistics would be a lot lower.

I think that Head Start does many wonderful things. The question is could Head Start do even more? That is what some of us are reaching for. Could we do more with Head Start than we are doing presently, without being remotely critical of what they are doing now?

Since Head Start began in 1965, and since then we have added Early Head Start. There are State Head Start programs under a variety of names out there, which, in States who are willing to step forward, do fund all of those kids under 100 percent of poverty who are not funded by the Federal Government. There is a daycare program. There are Pre-K Programs. We heard discussion of what has happened in New Jersey with extensive Pre-K Programs. There is Early Reading First. There are probably 10 other programs, as well as nutrition programs, health programs, and a variety of other programs that have gone into place in order to help kids. Frankly, I think these programs are very positive and very wonderful.

Head Start does stand out as a program that is different, which is not in the coordination section of all of the other programs in the State, because it is a Federal program with the money going directly to the recipients and is handled in that way. As a result, you cannot get the full coordination. There are certain hindrances or blocks preventing that.

I think that language should be strong in Title II, maybe even stronger than it is. I am more than willing to look at that. But the concept of doing this should not be taken as a threat or should not be taken as something which is going to be necessarily detrimental to Head Start. It is an effort to improve Head Start, and I would hope we would all look at it from that point of view.

It does not have to be block granting. There can be block granting. You can have maintenance of effort and you can have fences. There are things you can do to prevent that. It can indeed do what I think the program should do; that is, help children ages 3 and 4 all over this country. So it is something that clearly we are interested in continuing to look at. But we really appreciate the suggestions of all of you today in that area.

Let me ask just a few questions, the first is just one I worry about sometimes. We have billions of dollars that are going into this program and we are going to increase spending in our authorization. The question asks is the money as efficiently expended, as it should be? I do not know the answers, and you all are not financial experts, so maybe nobody here wants to take answer this. But we spend some $6,500 per child in Head Start; we spend less than that in full education. One could easily point out that a 3- or 4-year-old takes more maintenance; you have to have more teachers, more people in the classroom to help the child.

I am not an expert on the financing of Head Start. Is there some central depository? Is there some central review point? Are you comfortable that Head Start is being run as efficiently as possible, not just your own Head Starts, but in a national sense? Are we getting the full dollar to the children as best we can in this country? Does anybody want to answer that? If not, I can concoct other questions.

Ms. Lemke. Well, I will try as a Head Start grantee. First of all, I will certainly agree that there is always room for improvement. I want to make that clear.

In terms of the finances, I think it is an efficient use of moneys. I also think that a comprehensive program is never, in the short run, the cheapest way to go. I think in the long run it is the cheapest, and I think that is at the heart of Head Start.

So in terms of actual dollars spent, we are monitored very closely, both fiscally and programmatically. It is very extensive, much more so than any of the other sources.

Chairman Castle. Do you believe that all Head Starts are run fundamentally the same way with the same sort of administration, basically the same payment going to that administration, rent and upkeep, and then a payment for teachers? Are any of them run very differently in terms of how they expend their dollars, to the best of your knowledge?

Ms. Lemke. Maybe others can speak to this also. I think there are definitely variations, but I do know that we all have to adhere to the performance standards. So there may be variations in local designs, but I think the heart of every program is the same.

I think quality is another issue. My understanding is most programs have gotten quality marks, 85 percent or more. But I think the heart of the program is the same.

Dr. Lawrence. I would agree that there are variations among programs, but essentially the structure and the framework of all Head Start programs are very much the same.

To your question about the efficiency of Head Start funds, I think that 15 years ago that was an important question to ask. That is because there were very few States that were even involved in State-funded early childhood education programs, and if they were, they were minimal. But in the last 10 or so years, you have seen an explosion across the country in States implementing preschool programs. Of course, they vary widely in quality, content, and level of services.

But what we have done in Georgia to address the issue of the efficient use of services is by innovative thinking. Training is an example of where you can better maximize and coordinate dollars in our State, because our Pre-K teachers are getting the same training as our Head Start teachers. So why should we use two pots of money to train two different sets of people when we can use one pot of money to train a larger number of people? That is one way we have discovered. We can more efficiently utilize Head Start dollars by wrapping our Pre-K dollars around Head Start.

In my estimation, there are ways in certain States and environments where there can be a more efficient use of both pots of money, both State and Federal. These are examples that we have used in Georgia to address your concern.

Chairman Castle. Let me pose a question that is sort of a reverse of a question a Member of Congress asked me on the floor last night in the House of Representatives. He asked how schools were going to compete if we make Head Start teachers have higher requirements, 2-and 4-year degrees? I said I do not think that is the issue, rather how Head Start is going to compete.

If you are now hiring individuals who cannot be hired in schools it will be no problem to find teachers. But if suddenly we are mandating that have at least a 2-year degree, and pretty soon 50 percent of your teachers have to have a 4-year degree, how is Head Start going to compete? That concerns me. We are struggling now to serve all of the kids whom we believe should be served, and obviously more money is always an answer. Even though this is an area practically endorsed by everyone, money is still an issue. I have not heard Head Start providers or the Head Start Association or anyone oppose the higher requirements for individuals who are going to be teaching in Head Start. But I am concerned that as you get to those economically competitively requirements, it is going to be more difficult for Head Start groups who are running the programs. What is your thinking about alternative solutions other than just throwing more money at it?

I have asked this same question at home, and part of the answer is that there are a lot of people who are so devoted to this, that is what they are going to do, period. That is not everybody.

I would be curious to get your take on this.

Ms. Wilkins. There are several things that have to happen. First we need to remember that 25 percent of the Head Start lead teachers also have BA degrees, so this isn't going from 0 to 50.

Chairman Castle. We see 28 percent.

Ms. Wilkins. So it is not a 0 to 50, rather we are already a little bit there. Frankly, it is going to take more money for salaries, but those salaries need to be tied to formal education so that when someone gets their BA degree, you pay them more than when they had their AA degree. You do a step program.

But there are other things that need to happen as well. Congressman Miller has a bill to provide loan forgiveness for individuals going into early childhood education to make this affordable for people. You guys need to do that.

The other thing that needs to happen is while marking up Title II of the Higher Ed Act next week, you need to expand States' use of the Title II money not just to improve the preparation of K-12 teachers, but to improve the preparation of Pre-K teachers.

Part of the answer to how to upgrade the skills of Head Start workers cannot entirely be done in Head Start. As you talk about coordinating Head Start with State-funded programs, Federal programs need to be coordinated, all pulling in the same direction towards higher qualifications and higher salaries for staff in Head Start.

Ms. Haley. We have seen that happen in Pre-K. Teachers who become certified and can work in the public system will go there because they have benefits. For example, they have retirement that our private providers cannot offer.

Chairman Castle. My assumption is you are never going to close that gap entirely, but if you implement some of the things that as Ms. Wilkins suggested, we can close it enough to make it enticing enough to keep people in that profession. I think it is a coming trend that we need to keep an eye out for. My judgment is that part of this new authorization is going to make it through the legislative process and the pressure on Head Start is going to get even greater even it is today.

My time is really up. I want to ask a quick question and Ms. Lemke was the one who prompted this. You indicated in your answer to one of the questions, I believe Mrs. Davis's question, the first priority should be to increase funding to allow for all eligible children to be served. We do serve them all in Delaware because of what the State has done. That is also true in several other States, obviously proving it is a State function.

I am not going to comment on California right now. I cannot say I am a huge fan of the California State Government, but that is a whole different story. I think about 60 percent of eligible children are covered or go to Head Start, but in talking with others, I discovered a number of the people, for a variety of reasons, do not want to be in Head Start. For example, they may have a parent at home who does not want them there. This leads me to admit that I am never sure

exactly what we are discussing when we talk about covering everybody. I would like to know who desires service. Are you doing this from waiting lists? I don't know if there are national statistics on this which are really accurate at this point. We know how many of the eligible individuals from an income point of view in the demographic area are served, but we aren't sure about that next grouping. I believe this group to be about 40 percent, and I would be interested to know how many of them are really in desire or need of the Head Start service.

And I just want to ask about the backup that you see and if anyone has any knowledge of the statistics regarding that area?

Ms. Lemke. Well, it depends on a given center and its geographic area and the demographics of the people in that community but we.

Chairman Castle. That is a good point. It is community by community, as well and State by State for all that matters.

Ms. Lemke. Yes. We operate 15 Head Start centers in the county of Sonoma, which is about a 500,000-person county. At some of our centers we do have waiting lists; but not necessarily all of them. Certainly there is a greater waiting list at the centers with a greater concentration of poor children.

Chairman Castle. Ms. Wilkins, I understood your follow up on that there is a whole other level of children. We may not be reaching the poverty level high enough that could be served, and I recognize that. Obviously, there is the question of dollars in terms of what we can do but all these programs are by choice and there are many people who do choose to do otherwise, and sometimes those kids turn out extraordinarily well too.

Ms. Wilkins. Dr. Lawrence and I were talking just before this hearing about the Georgia participation rate. Georgia has a universal program that is available to any family regardless of income. Dr. Lawrence, would you please talk about that?

Dr. Lawrence. When we target 4-year-olds, between the Head Start program and our Pre-K Program, we estimate we serve around 85 percent of the 4-year-olds in our State. But speaking to your point, we think that is a higher statistic because there are a certain number of 4-year-olds in our State that do not want Head Start or Pre-K. And so it is hard to judge. I think the best indicators are waiting lists rather than total universe of children possibly served. In our case, it is about 105,000 to 110,000 4-year-olds. It really depends, jointly, between our two programs and Head Start, leading us to estimate our service at 85 percent of the total 4-year-olds in Georgia.

Chairman Castle. It is universal. It is not income limited at all?

Dr. Lawrence. It is not income limited.

Ms. Wilkins. But if you have the Georgia program with about an 85 percent uptake rate where people are sort of free to do what they want, where income and the cost of the program is not an issue, one can assume that lower-income families would exercise the same choices as all of the

families in Georgia. It just shows there is still a gap in Head Start between the 60 percent we are serving and the 85 percent that take advantage of a universal program.

Chairman Castle. Although some children may be in other programs, not in the 60 percent Head Start.

Ms. Wilkins. Correct.

Chairman Castle. Because the 85 percent includes all of their programs, I believe.

Dr. Lawrence. No. Just in our case and just Pre-K and Head Start. There are children and family childcare programs in other settings as well.

Chairman Castle. I am not really quibbling, I am just trying to make sure I am correct in my thinking.

Ms. Wilkins. The 15 percent of 4-year-olds are either in family day care, home, or somewhere else, but 85 percent in Georgia are served by a combination of Head Start and the universal program.

Chairman Castle. So if 60 percent is correct, in Head Start typically, then there is some percentage that are in Pre-K typically, and then that is 85. My sense is it is probably not, that Georgia probably picks up another 15 to 20 percent of kids who would not otherwise be served, as a guess. I am no expert on these things, but this would be my guess.

Let us pause there. I have gone over my time. I want to turn to Ms. Woolsey for a closing statement that she wishes to make, but let me thank all of you. This has been a very interesting and helpful panel. Some of the written information that you have submitted that we have not had a chance to ask questions about is also helpful. So we will be looking at this.

Ms. Woolsey.

Ms. Woolsey. Mr. Chairman, before I thank the panel and say nice things, I would like to enter something into the record.

Chairman Castle. Do you want to say something mean first?

Ms. Woolsey. No. But I mean, it does have something to do with them, but it is more something I would like to have in the record. And this is two letters, one from Windy Hill, the Department of the Health and Human Services, virtually scaring Head Start workers and staff into thinking they aren't supposed to comment on this issue, and then the other letter is a response from the national Head Start association in regard to this same communication. I think it should be in our records, and I think today shows us that and it reconfirms that we should encourage openness from the Head Start programs and the Pre-K programs, so that we can get the best information from those on the ground that know the most. So I would like that if you would put that in the record.

DOCUMENT SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD BY RANKING MINORITY MEMBER LYNN WOOLSEY: LETTER WRITTEN BY WINDY HILL, ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER, HEAD START BUREAU, ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES – SEE APPENDIX G

DOCUMENT SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD BY RANKING MINORITY MEMBER LYNN WOOLSEY: RESPONSE WRITTEN BY SARAH GREENE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, NATIONAL HEAD START ASSOCIATION; TO A LETTER WRITTEN BY WINDY HILL, ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER, HEAD START BUREAU, ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES – SEE APPENDIX H

Chairman Castle. Obviously, they will be admitted without objection. I would personally object somewhat to the characterization of the letter from Windy Hill, having seen that letter, and I would also like to point out that before this committee, we do obviously encourage openness.

Ms. Woolsey. I know we do.

Chairman Castle. Without objection they are admitted.

Ms. Woolsey. Thank you.

Then I would like to thank the witnesses. This has been a great panel. It is very obvious with your thoughtfulness and your remarks and your support of Head Start in general to the point of suggesting expanding it, fully funding Head Start, making sure that the teachers are totally educated and that we pay them and pay for making it possible for that education level. It is just clear that, you know, like, I know that children are the future of this country and they have to be the number one priority and there should be nothing else that we think of first before the children in this Nation and their education.

I want to thank the Democrats on this subcommittee for being here and 100 percent showed up. So many of you stayed. Thank you very much. It is obvious that this is extremely important to all of us and we thank you for your good information.

Chairman Castle. Thank you, Ms. Woolsey. I would like to thank all the members that participated, Republicans and Democrats alike. I would like to thank the witnesses for your work in preparing to be here and then getting here and being here. I would also like to thank all the people who sat through this, even stood through it. We do not have that happen very often. We thank you for that, and we will continue to work on this. As you know, it is a hot and heavy subject. If you have information to get to us, please give it to us as soon as you can. With that we stand adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:10 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

APPENDIX A – WRITTEN OPENING STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN MICHAEL N. CASTLE, SUBCOMMITTEE ON EDUCATION REFORM, COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE, U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE MICHAEL N. CASTLE
CHAIRMAN
SUBCOMMITTEE ON EDUCATION REFORM
COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE

Hearing On:
"H.R. 2210, The School Readiness Act of 2003"
June 3, 2003

Good morning. Thank you for joining us today for our second hearing to discuss the impact of the Head Start program in preparing disadvantaged children for school. Since our last hearing, I along with several of my colleagues, introduced H.R. 2210, The School Readiness Act of 2003, which reauthorizes the Head Start program for the next 5 years.

The School Readiness Act of 2003 builds upon the reforms of previous reauthorizations of Head Start, as well as the recommendations of President Bush. H.R. 2210 sends a clear signal that every child, regardless of economic status, should have the best chance possible to succeed.

We all can agree on the need for Head Start and its astounding success, but we must also recognize that Head Start can produce even greater results for children. Students who attend Head Start programs start school more prepared than those with similar backgrounds that do not attend Head Start. However, Head Start students continue to enter kindergarten well below national norms in school readiness. By moving to close this school readiness gap, the School Readiness Act will improve results for almost a million Head Start students across the nation.

Under this bill, Head Start children will have a greater opportunity to enter school with demonstrated pre-reading, language, and pre-mathematics skills, as well as the benefits from the nutritional and health services that Head Start has always provided. Children's progress will be based on scientifically based and clear criteria that will enable parents and teachers to accurately view a child's progress.

This bill also will require Head Start teachers to be more prepared to ensure young children are ready for school. By 2008, 50 percent of all Head Start teachers must have a baccalaureate degree, and after three years no new teachers will be hired without an associate degree.

H.R. 2210 also improves the accountability of Head Start programs. As under current law, local grantees will be responsible for their use of the federal funds, but unlike the present system, H.R. 2210 requires grantees to demonstrate results in order to maintain it's grantee privilege. In this legislation, recipients of Head Start grants would have to demonstrate that they have met program improvement goals in order to continue receiving Federal Head Start dollars. Those who fail to meet those goals would first receive additional assistance to help them improve their program. This bill demonstrates our commitment to Head Start by authorizing a $202 million dollar increase, making it a $6.87 billion dollar program.

For some states, this bill will also provide the opportunity for increased integration of preschool programs with Head Start. This opportunity will only be available to states that have exhibited a substantial dedication to early childhood education and care through financial investment, the creation of statewide school readiness standards and professional development requirements for early childhood teachers. States that take advantage of this opportunity will be required to maintain their current levels of State funding, thus protecting Head Start from state budget cuts.

The State demonstration program was developed out of a recognition that the emergence of pre-kindergarten programs in many States is adding to the already existing patchwork of child care and preschool programs serving preschool children and their families. As a result, children in different programs are likely to receive varying levels of quality care, with different degrees of emphasis on cognitive development and school readiness. Further, Head Start, State pre-K, and other preschool programs within a State often are duplicative. By coordinating efforts to recruit children, developing State guidelines for care, aligning school readiness standards with K-12 goals, and other activities, a State can leverage resources to spend funding more efficiently and also serve additional children better.

My home state of Delaware has recognized the positive impact coordination will have on children. Delaware's Early Childhood Assistance Program has not only adopted Head Start standards but also uses some current Head Start grantees to operate the program.

Through these and other improvements, H.R. 2210, will increase the likelihood of Head Start children starting kindergarten at the same level as their more advantaged peers.

While the introduction of the School Readiness Act is a good first step, I remind each of you that we are at the beginning, not the end of this important process to reauthorize the Head Start program. I look forward to working with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to improve this legislation as we move forward.

Today we will hear from experts who will help us to consider the merits of this legislation and ways in which it may be strengthened. Our witnesses' unique perspectives on Head Start will offer insights that will be tremendously helpful to the Members of this Committee as we work to improve this important piece of legislation. We look forward to their comments.

With that, I would like to recognize Congresswoman Woolsey who also will make a brief opening statement.

APPENDIX B – DOCUMENT SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD BY RANKING MINORITY MEMBER LYNN WOOLSEY: WRITTEN ARTICLE QUOTING DR. EDWARD ZIGLER

Head Start doesn't need major change--ISSUE: Head Start legislation

By T&D Editorial Staff

OUR VIEW: Lawmakers should not dismantle successful program by making politically motivated changes

Legislation aimed at reforming the Head Start program has some good components -- but Republicans should not use the proposal as a backdoor way to dismantle what has been an effective federal program for preparing at-risk children for school.

The Head Start reauthorization legislation proposed by the Bush administration and backed by congressional Republicans would require that half of all teachers hold bachelor's degrees by 2008. That's a good thing.

The Trust for Early Education agrees. Established in 2002 with a grant from the Pew Charitable Trusts, the trust provides a strong advocacy voice for high-quality, voluntary prekindergarten for all 3- and 4-year-olds.

"Research shows that quality classrooms and quality learning environments are associated with college-educated teachers. Requiring Head Start teachers to hold bachelor's degrees will help provide Head Start children with," as trust Chairman John Boehner puts it, "the best this nation can offer."

"Well-educated teachers coupled with other measures in this bill will boost the school readiness levels of hundreds of thousands Head Start children."

Those "other measures," however, could serve to undo the effectiveness of the program, which is about more than academics. It's about teaching life skills to young children in need of such training to function in the modern world of academics.

The legislation would require that all new funds for Head Start go to formal education, training and teacher salaries. And President Bush wants to give states the option to take over Head Start programs, now directed by Health and Human Services, and mix them with existing state-funded preschool programs.

We join opponents in worrying that cash-strapped states will wind up using the federal dollars to cut state preschool funding and that important quality standards will be diminished. In other words, Head Start may begin a descent into ineffectiveness.

Dr. Edward Zigler, the Yale University professor emeritus widely known as the "father of Head Start," warns that proposals to turn Head Start over to the states are "ill conceived and unjustified."

In remarks prepared for the occasion of his receiving an award from the National Head Start Association, Zigler offers this perspective:

"My reading of the by-now voluminous evidence is that Head Start is clearly successful in achieving its primary mission, which is to prepare at-risk children for school. There is a real and palpable danger to children if you throw out the comprehensive services, parental involvement and community focus of Head Start in trade for an exclusive, cognitive and literacy focus. Learning is not a purely cognitive exercise; to learn, children need to have good physical and mental health and have families whose needs are met.

"I see none of the needed focus on these non-literacy issues in the ill-conceived proposals now being circulated to hobble Head Start. Instead, I see a waiving of standards in exchange for the promise that such standards will be instituted within two years, which is an astonishing approach to stewardship of federal tax dollars. I have researched the question of whether or not the states can do a better job of running Head Start. We compared state-run preschools to Head Start as it exists today and found the latter a clear winner in almost every category. At this time, Head Start will be a better program if it is in the federal government rather than up to 50 other places."

With there to be no substantive saving of money in such a change by the federal government, there is no reason to tamper with Head Start.

If it ain't broke, don't fix it.

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APPENDIX C – WRITTEN OPENING STATEMENT OF RANKING MINORITY MEMBER LYNN WOOLSEY, SUBCOMMITTEE ON EDUCATION REFORM, COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE, U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

REP. LYNN WOOLSEY
RANKING MEMBER
SUBCOMMITTEE ON EDUCATION REFORM
HEARING ON H.R. 2210, THE "SCHOOL READINESS ACT OF 2003:
June 3, 2003

THANK YOU, MR. CHAIRMAN.
IT'S GOOD THAT WE'RE HAVING ANOTHER OPPORTUNITY TO REVIEW AND DISCUSS **H.R. 2210** AND THAT WE HAVEN'T GONE IMMEDIATELY TO A MARK-UP.

I HAVE A NUMBER OF CONCERNS AND QUESTIONS ABOUT **H.R. 2210,** PARTICULARLY TITLE TWO OF THE BILL.

BUT, BEFORE I TALK ABOUT THOSE, I WANT TO STATE FOR THE RECORD HOW PROUD I AM THAT ONE OF OUR WITNESSES TODAY IS **HELGA LEMKE,** WHO IS THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF **COMMUNITY ACTION PARTNERSHIP OF SONOMA COUNTY,** WHICH IS PART OF THE DISTRICT THAT I REPRESENT IN CONGRESS.

MS. LEMKE HAS BEEN WITH **COMMUNITY ACTION PARTNERSHIP** SINCE 1989. SHE HAS ALWAYS BEEN A WELL- INFORMED AND THOUGHTFUL RESOURCE FOR ME ON **HEAD START** AND OTHER COMMUNITY PROGRAMS, AND I KNOW THAT THE COMMITTEE WILL BENEFIT FROM HER TESTIMONY.

I ALSO KNOW THAT **HELGA** AND MANY OTHERS IN THIS ROOM TODAY SHARE MY CONCERNS WITH **TITLE TWO** OF **H.R. 2210.**

FOR NEARLY FORTY YEARS, THE **HEAD START** PROGRAM HAS BEEN THE SHINING EXAMPLE OF THIS NATION'S COMMITMENT TO A BETTER LIFE FOR LOW-INCOME CHILDREN.

IN FACT, WE HAVE DOCUMENTED RESEARCH THAT **HEAD START** IS KEEPING THAT COMMITMENT, PREPARING CHILDREN IN A VARIETY OF WAYS TO SUCCEED, IN SCHOOL AND IN THEIR LIVES.

SO, I GUESS MY MOST BASIC QUESTION IS - "WHY WOULD WE WANT TO MAKE THE FUNDAMENTAL CHANGES TO **HEAD START** THAT **TITLE TWO** OF YOUR BILL WILL CAUSE?"

WHAT GOOD REASON COULD THERE BE TO TURN **HEAD START** FUNDS, AND THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR MAINTAINING **HEAD START'S** CURRENT HIGH QUALITY AND PERFORMANCE STANDARDS, OVER TO THE STATES, PARTICULARLY AT A TIME WHEN STATES ARE FACING HUGE BUDGET DEFICITS, AND ARE CUTTING BACK THEIR OWN EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS?

THE ELIGIBILIY REQUIREMENTS FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE BLOCK GRANT DEMONSTRATION ARE SO BROAD THAT THERE ISN'T A SINGLE STATE THAT WOULDN'T BE ELIGIBLE, RIGHT NOW.

TITLE TWO WOULD BE JUST ONE HUGE SUPER WAIVER OF CURRENT **HEAD START** LAW THAT WILL WEAKEN AND EVENTUALLY KILL **HEAD START**.

I WANT TO CLOSE MY STATEMENT BY READING FROM COMMENTS THAT **DR. EDWARD ZIGLER,** THE HEAD START VISIONARY, MADE WHEN ASKED ABOUT THE **HEAD START** BLOCK GRANT PROPOSAL. FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO DON'T KNOW, **DR. ZIGLER** WAS THE "FATHER OF HEAD START" AND WAS NAMED BY **PRESIDENT RICHARD NIXON** TO BE HIS DIRECTOR OF **THE OFFICE OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT**. HE IS CURRENTLY A PROFESSOR AND RESEARCHER AT **YALE UNIVERSITY**.

HE SAYS, IN PART....
"I SEE A WAIVING OF STANDARDS IN EXCHANGE FOR THE PROMISE THAT SUCH STANDARDS WILL BE INSTITUTED WITHIN TWO YEARS, WHICH IS AN ASTONISHING APPROACH TO STEWARDSHIP OF FEDERAL TAX DOLLARS. I HAVE RESEARCHED THE QUESTION OF WHETHER OR NOT STATES CAN DO

A BETTER JOB OF RUNNING **HEAD START**. WE COMPARED STATE-RUN PRESCHOOLS TO **HEAD START** AS IT EXISTS TODAY AND FOUND **HEAD START** A CLEAR WINNER IN ALMOST EVERY CATEGORY. "

MR. CHAIRMAN, I ASK UNANIMOUS CONSENT TO ENTER DR. ZIGLER'S COMPLETE STATEMENT INTO THE RECORD.

WE SHOULD NOT BE DISMANTLING A GOOD PROGRAM. OUR EFFORTS SHOULD BE USED TO MAKING THIS PROGRAM AVAILABALE FOR ALL ELIGIBLE CHILDREN BY FULL FUNDING HEAD START.

WE SHOULD LEARN FROM SUCCESSES AND ENSURE THAT THOSE SUCCESSES CAN BE DUPLICATED ALL ACROSS OUR NATION.

AND, WE SHOULD NOT INTIMIDATE HEAD START STAFF INTO BELIEVING THAT THEY CANNOT EXPRESS THEIR THOUGHTS ABOUT THE FUTURE OF HEAD START. WHO, FOR GOODNESS SAKES, KNOWS MORE THAN THEY DO ABOUT THIS SUBJECT? AGAIN, MR. CHAIRMAN, THAT IS WHY I AM DELIGHTED TO HAVE HELGA LEMKE HERE - SHE KNOWS!

APPENDIX D – WRITTEN STATEMENT OF MS. AMY WILKINS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, TRUST FOR EARLY EDUCATION

Testimony of
Amy Wilkins, Executive Director
Trust for Early Education
Before the House Subcommittee on Education Reform
June 3, 2003

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee, my name is Amy Wilkins and I am the Executive Director of the Trust for Early Education (also known as TEE). I very much appreciate this opportunity to be here this morning to discuss with you H.R. 2210, "The School Readiness Act of 2003."

The Trust for Early Education (TEE) was established in 2002 to promote high quality, voluntary pre-kindergarten programs for all three- and four-year-olds. In the past 12 months TEE has distributed over $2 million in grants to advocates in nine states (Illinois, New York, New Jersey, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Arkansas, Wisconsin, North Carolina and Oklahoma) to help them advance the cause of high quality pre-kindergarten at the state level. In addition to our work in the States, TEE works at the federal level to increase access to these programs and improve their quality.

In this role, we have greatly appreciated the opportunity to work with Members and staff of your Committee in the development of this legislation. This Committee has been very open and forthcoming in their discussion with us, and we are pleased that the legislation as introduced includes many of our suggested changes. My testimony today is focused on outlining several positive aspects of H.R. 2210, while also providing our suggestions for improving this bill—and the Head Start program as a whole—as the legislative process moves forward.

We believe that the Head Start program has unquestionably achieved a great deal of success since its inception; however, like all programs, improvements can be made like those we are here to talk about today. Clearly, Head Start has played a crucial role in providing millions of low-income children with a foundation of comprehensive social, emotional, and academic services. For this fact alone, Head Start must be recognized as one of our most successful federal social programs.

Yet, after 38 years, we have learned a great deal about how this program can be improved even more. We must take advantage of the ever-growing body of compelling research about how young minds develop. We now know that all young children are capable of learning if provided the tools they need, tools such as highly qualified teachers. Without a doubt, what young children learn at this stage in life is a very significant factor in their ongoing academic success. The Family and Child Experiences Survey (FACES) data from both 1997-98 and 2000-2001 suggest that a year of Head Start boosts the vocabulary, early writing, letter recognition and early mathematical skills of poor children, and narrows the school entry skills gap between them and more affluent children.

Nonetheless, when Head Start children enter kindergarten, the gap remains. Our goal today is to explore ways in which Head Start can continue to narrow that gap, and find ways to serve the eligible children that Head Start doesn't reach.

In asking Head Start to do more in terms of cognitive development, it is important that Congress not cut back on aspects of the program that support strong social, emotional and physical aspects of children's lives. *The strategy for improving Head Start must be a strategy of addition, not subtraction.*

This Committee has recognized these important facts, and has begun to incorporate these concepts into H.R. 2210 as introduced. This bill represents an important first step toward improving the quality of the Head Start program and as I will outline in more detail later in my testimony, recognizes the crucial role

states can—and must—play in expanding high quality pre-kindergarten services to far more children across this country.

To begin, we are very encouraged by Title I of this bill, particularly with the teacher education and training provisions. We believe these provisions will enhance both the cognitive development of Head Start children, and their social and emotional development as well. The requirement that half of all Head Start teachers have bachelor's degrees with specialized training in early education by 2008 is a significant step forward in our efforts to boost the quality of Head Start teachers. This provision builds upon the research findings of the most respected authorities on early childhood development. The National Research Council of the National Academy of Sciences and other well-respected researchers have found that young children are better prepared for school and life when they are taught by better-educated teachers.

Let me give you just one example. We know that vocabulary is a critical building block for later literacy. Research shows a clear link between the number and complexity of words spoken by adults—including parents and teachers—and the number and complexity of words spoken by children in their homes and classrooms. Adult literacy is closely related to postsecondary education—the National Survey of Adult Literacy finds that adults with only associate's degrees are twice as likely as are those with bachelor's degrees to have literacy skills below the "competent level". The more educated the teacher, the more literate he or she is likely to be.

Children in poverty know fewer words than their peers from higher socioeconomic levels. That means they will have more difficulty mastering and enjoying basic reading skills. If we want children in Head Start to build the vocabularies that they need to become strong readers and eliminate this vocabulary deficit, they must have well-educated teachers.

Increasing the number of college graduates in Head Start classrooms will do more than boost vocabulary and other early academic skills; it will aid their social and emotional development. Research shows that teachers with at least a bachelor's degree level education and specialized training in early childhood development are significantly more sensitive (i.e., engaging and attentive), less negative (i.e., critical, punitive) and less detached from students in their classrooms than are teachers with less formal education.

The BA requirement enjoys broad support from groups advocating on behalf of young children including the Children's Defense Fund, the National Association for the Education of Young Children, Fight Crime Invest in Kids, and the National Institute for Early Education Research.

It is worth noting that while the 50% bachelor's degree requirement and the associate's degree requirement are important, they represent modest progress compared to the teacher education requirements of many state-funded pre-kindergarten programs. Twenty-four of the forty states with state funded pre-kindergarten programs already require that *all* pre-kindergarten teachers have at least a bachelor's degree. We hope that this is the beginning, not the end, of efforts to raise teacher qualifications in the program.

As powerful as we believe this provision will be in boosting the school readiness of Head Start children, we believe that this Committee, through the reauthorization of Title II of the Higher Education Act, can make it even more powerful. Next week, when the full Committee marks-up Title II, it should amend the law to allow states to use Title II funds to improve the preparation of pre-kindergarten as well as kindergarten through twelfth grade teachers.

To ensure that Head Start programs have the resources to implement these provisions to improve the quality of teachers, we applaud the Committee for setting aside 60% of all new money for quality

improvement activities like ongoing professional development, scholarships, and salary increases. This provision will be in effect throughout the length of the reauthorization and is a significant increase over current law.

While we appreciate the important changes that have already been made to Title I of this legislation, we believe there are several additional changes that should be made to further strengthen this title:

- H.R. 2210 should include an annual center-by-center public reporting requirement on the educational attainment of all teachers. This will help parents, the public, and Congress better monitor progress toward the important teacher education goal established by this bill.

- Head Start programs' existing salary scales should be required to relate directly to the level of teachers' formal education. It is entirely reasonable for the Federal government to demand higher levels of formal education for Head Start teachers. However, as we demand more education from them we must compensate them at higher levels. This recommendation is based both on fairness and on the knowledge that Head Start teachers with bachelor's degrees and specialized training in early childhood development could earn substantially more teaching in public school kindergarten programs. If we are to attract and retain well-educated staff to the Head Start program, we have to pay them competitive wages.

- The bill should require that each state receiving a collaboration grant under Title I conduct a county-by-county audit of the need for and relative availability of high quality pre-kindergarten services for low-income children. The current language places more emphasis on who must be part of the collaboration than it does on what the collaboration should accomplish. And while there should be flexibility in the goals for the collaboration, and they should be dependent on the needs of the state, a comprehensive service audit would provide a road map for the work of the collaborative, allowing them to target the areas of greatest need (both in terms of program reach and quality). Without such baseline information, it is unlikely that the collaborative process would lead to better partnerships and delivery of pre-kindergarten services.

Finally, with respect to Title I, increased funding over the next five years is critical to keeping the quality improvement promises that this bill makes. The reality is that increasing quality means increased costs. The 60% quality set aside, which will total about $121.8 million in quality improvement funds this year is only a small down payment. To put this in context, just increasing the salaries of teachers with bachelor's degrees to levels similar to those of public school kindergarten teachers would cost over $2 billion dollars.

In addition to the improvements made in Title I to bolster Head Start quality, TEE believes that the only way over the long term to ensure that all children—particularly low-income children—have access to high quality pre-kindergarten is through a strong and carefully planned federal-state partnership.

When Head Start was created it was the largest publicly funded pre-kindergarten program for poor children. Head Start is serving only about 60% of the nation's very poorest children. The need for such services is much greater. Today slightly more children — a majority of them low-income - - receive early childhood education through state funded pre-kindergarten programs than through Head Start (765,089 v 761,844, respectively)[1]. The significance of state funded programs serving a similar universe of children is a reality that Head Start policy must recognize.

[1] Building Blocks for Success: State Efforts in Early Childhood Education (January 2002). Education Week, Quality Counts 2002.

We must begin to explore ways in which a federal-state partnership can increase the availability of high quality early learning programs for all children, but most especially for poor children. To be clear, a federal-state partnership must not lead to a decrease in the federal role. Federal investment must increase and federal policy must evolve and improve, and do so in a way that leverages greater investment and quality improvements in the states. With this Head Start reauthorization, Congress has the power to improve the school readiness of children enrolled in Head Start *and* to begin to explore how to leverage the quality of state funded pre-kindergarten programs.

A first step toward a positive federal-state partnership was made in Title I by expanding the role of the present state collaboration offices supported through Head Start funds. By including the Chief State School Officer and local school districts among the designated collaborators, the bill strengthens links between Head Start agencies and the states' educational systems. The emphasis on state planning will encourage further early education efforts at the state level. While Head Start's comprehensive quality standards must be protected, the alignment of these standards with state school readiness standards (as many states are already doing) would promote a high quality, integrated statewide system of early education.

We believe that more can be done to foster a federal-state partnership. Unfortunately, these provisions have already created a great deal of polarization and rhetoric around the issue of federal-state partnerships. TEE believes that there needs to be more honest discussion about its potential and that the notion of state involvement in Head Start deserves real consideration on its merits.

Despite the widely accepted characterization of state funded pre-kindergarten programs as being low quality, the reality of state funded programs is far more mixed. Of the 40 states with state funded pre-kindergarten[2]:

- 27 have higher teacher education requirements than Head Start.
- 28 have teacher-child ratios that are as low as or lower than Head Start.
- 17 pay their pre-kindergarten teachers an average salary higher than the Head Start average salary.
- 23 have group size limits that are as low as or lower than Head Start.
- 19 offer nutrition, health screening, and family support.
- 7 require that their pre-kindergarten programs be accredited by NAEYC.

While many state-funded pre-kindergarten programs meet or exceed Head Start standards, many do not:

- 16 states have specific curriculum/content standards for pre-kindergarten programs, but only 6 states require that the programs that they fund actually use these standards.
- 11 states either fail to regulate teacher-child ratios or have ratios higher than Head Start.
- 17 states either fail to regulate group size or allow group sizes higher than Head Start.
- 12 states have minimum teacher qualifications the same as Head Start.

In short, the state pre-kindergarten picture is a very mixed one. A federal-state partnership needs to be carefully designed to recognize the differences between states, to allow for collaboration with *only* those states that have mature, high quality programs, and to provide an incentive to states that have lower quality programs or more limited programs to improve and expand their pre-kindergarten efforts.

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[2] Building Blocks for Success: State Efforts in Early Childhood Education (January 2002). Education Week, Quality Counts 2002. Note, pre-kindergarten teacher education and teacher-child ratios are presented for 39 of the 40 states with pre-kindergarten programs.

Moreover, we believe that any federal-state partnership proposal needs to be very carefully structured to demonstrate clear and timely lessons about how a well-constructed federal-state partnership demonstration might increase the number of low-income children receiving high quality services. These federal-state partnership demonstration projects must compromise neither quality or quantity when it comes to services for Head Start children. We believe it is possible to design such careful experiments; we believe that changes need to be made to improve Title II to ensure that these goals are met.

It is in this vein that we offer the following comments and recommendations:

- To participate, states must have demonstrated a commitment to high quality pre-kindergarten in these ways:

    - Participating states should be encouraged to expand and improve their programs, and should not supplant state money with federal dollars. We are pleased that the Committee has included maintenance of effort provision to prevent this from occurring. This should, however, be further clarified to ensure that the percentage of low income children served is not reduced, that as many low income children as possible have the opportunity to participate in two years rather than one year of pre-kindergarten, and that federal funds now being used by states to support pre-kindergarten programs not be reduced;
    - Only states in which the investment in state funded pre-kindergarten equals at least 75% of the Federal government's Head Start payment should be allowed to apply;
    - Only states that currently apply pre-kindergarten learning standards aligned with their K-12 standards to all of their pre-kindergarten programs should be able to apply;
    - Only those states that already have a bachelor's degree requirement for their pre-kindergarten teachers, or have an associate's degree requirement and are willing to move to 50% bachelor's degree by 2008, should be allowed to apply; and
    - The application process must make clear that only those states meeting the required elements be allowed to participate. In addition, we would encourage that there be a rigorous approval process that not only gives the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services authority and discretion, but also include outside peer review by experts in research.

- While the bill includes a requirement that states have a plan that identifies the needs for services, we believe that this requirement should be further clarified to ensure that it is based on an actual determination of needs, (based upon the audit proposed under Title I for collaborative grants) with annual measurable goals for extending high quality pre-kindergarten to areas and populations in which it is not currently available. And, they must be required to assess and publicly report progress toward achieving their goals. Furthermore, consistent failure to meet their self-selected goals should eliminate a state from participation in Title II.

- The bill also demonstrates that the Committee recognizes the need for the federal-state partnership to be evaluated; however, this evaluation can and should be strengthened by clarifying that each state's performance will be evaluated and a comparison will be done to evaluate the performance between participating and non-participating states. There should also be specific funding provided and a deadline for the completion of the evaluation so that Congress will have this information prior to the next reauthorization.

In conclusion, for almost forty years, Head Start has given millions of our nation's neediest children a better chance to flourish as individuals, making our nation stronger and more prosperous through their success. This reauthorization recognizes the increasing demands of 21st century America and a global

economy, pushing quality a notch higher and demanding more of Head Start programs and teachers, so our children can continue to succeed. We have the opportunity to make this program even better.

We understand that this bill represents only the beginning of a critical dialogue between Congress, the Administration, states and the many other stakeholders in the Head Start program. We look forward to working with all Members of this Committee in the coming weeks and months to continue to strengthen this legislation.

APPENDIX E – WRITTEN STATEMENT OF DR. ROBERT LAWRENCE, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF COLLABORATIVE SERVICES, DIRECTOR OF HEAD START STATE COLLABORATION PROJECT, GEORGIA OFFICE OF SCHOOL READINESS

Georgia Office of School Readiness
Testimony Before the Committee on Education and the Workforce
United States House of Representatives
June 3, 2003

On behalf of the State of Georgia and the Georgia Office of School Readiness, I would like to thank the members of the House Committee on Education and the Workforce for the opportunity to provide testimony this morning on H.R. 2210, "The School Readiness Act of 2003." As a nationally recognized leader in the field of early care and education, our state is uniquely qualified to speak about issues related to the development and implementation of a comprehensive, high quality preschool program for children and families. In addition, the excellent relationship our office has developed with Georgia Head Start programs over the past 10 years gives us a historical perspective on the coordination of federal and state funds for early care and education programs that can serve as a model for other states.

With that in mind, I would like to make three principle points this morning in my testimony:

- First, I want to underscore the enormous contributions that Head Start programs have made on behalf of low-income children and families in Georgia over the past 35-plus years;
- Second, I want to provide examples to this committee on how our lottery-funded Pre-K program has collaborated with Head Start over the past 10 years; and
- Third, I want to speak about Title II of H.R. 2210, that authorizes a state demonstration program to allow a limited number of states the opportunity to integrate existing preschool programs with Head Start.

The Georgia Office of School Readiness has long recognized that Head Start's program design serves as the model for all programs – whether they are federal, state or locally-funded – that target services to low-income preschool children and their families. By that I mean, the rigorous program Head Start Performance Standards, the comprehensive services to children and their families – including parent training and education and supportive social services for families – appropriate curricula that address each child's educational needs and other activities that promote the social and emotional well-being of young children are all necessary ingredients to help ensure the positive development of children within the context of a supportive family environment. The federal government recognized, from the inception of the Head Start demonstration project in 1965, that these program design elements were critical to providing children from low-income families an opportunity to grow and develop in concert with children from more advantaged backgrounds.

A large measure of the success our Office has had with our Head Start partners over the past 10 years has been the result of our belief that the Head Start program model of services gives Georgia's low-income children and families those opportunities that are necessary for success in school and in life. We in the Office of School Readiness have

always honored and respected Head Start and Early Head Start's commitment to high quality programs for preschool children and families and have recognized the unique contributions these programs have made to the well being of our state's youngest and most disadvantaged children.

As you know, the Georgia lottery-funded program for 4-year-old children is recognized as one of the premier school readiness programs in the country. We recently celebrated our 10th anniversary of providing Pre-K services to all Georgia 4-year-olds. To date, Georgia has served over 500,000 4-year-olds through the use of lottery funding. The model for the delivery of services in the Georgia Pre-K program includes the following elements:

- An educationally enriched and developmentally appropriate program that provides services to children 6.5 hrs per day for 180 days a year.
- Programs in both private and public facilities and in all 159 Georgia counties.
- The requirement that all programs to have credentialed lead teachers and an adult/child ratio of 1:10.
- The requirement that each program is evaluated using a Pre-K Program Quality Assessment (PQA) twice a year. Our staff works with programs to provide technical assistance and training to improve quality and insure that all health and safety regulations are followed.
- Our program provides free training to project directors, resource coordinators, lead teachers, and assistant teachers throughout the year on topics such as curriculum, early education best practices, observation/portfolio assessment and early literacy. All staff working with Pre-K children are required to attend annual training.

The Office of School Readiness has had a unique opportunity over these past 10 years to design and implement a Pre-K program that our research tells us has met its goal of preparing children to enter school with the necessary cognitive, physical, social and emotional skills and abilities to be successful. The support of our program from previous Governors Zell Miller and Roy Barnes through our current Governor Sonny Perdue, coupled with the support we receive from all citizens of Georgia who have children in our program, have been instrumental in the success we have enjoyed.

As a result of our shared vision and commitment to high quality programs for preschool children, the Office of School Readiness has enjoyed a long and fruitful collaborative partnership with Head Start over the past 10 years. We have benefited from the support of our federal partner, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Regional Office for the Administration for Children and Families, and as a result of this excellent federal-state partnership, we have designed and implemented a number of innovative collaborative partnerships with Head Start programs. These partnerships include such initiatives as:

- ***The Georgia Head Start Full-Day, Full-Year Initiative*** – OSR developed this initiative to assist local Head Start programs in providing full-day, full-year services to children and families. Through funding from OSR, Head Start programs have been able to provide full-day, full-year services to children whose parents are TANF recipients and must either be working, going to school or in a job-training program. With OSR funds, Head Start programs have helped nearly 10,000 "at-risk" families work toward economic self-sufficiency since 1998, when OSR began this initiative.

- ***The OSR Standards of Care Initiative*** – OSR developed this initiative, which is now 5-years-old, to improve the quality of care for children birth to four who are enrolled in Pre-K and Early Head Start centers. Sixty (60) early care and education centers have received the "Center of Distinction" award from OSR by providing high quality services to children birth to four. Another 75 centers are currently involved in this statewide initiative. Data from the Infant-Toddler Environmental Rating Scale (ITERS) and the Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale (ECERS) show that the Standards of Care (SoC) Initiative has resulted in significant improvements in the quality of early childhood classroom environments in our state. Many of the children enrolled in centers participating in this initiative are from "at-risk" families.

- ***Georgia Head Start/Child Care Partnership Initiative*** was developed by the Office of School Readiness, the Georgia Head Start Association and the Region IV Administration for Children and Families. The purpose of this initiative, which began in the spring of 2002, is to provide Head Start programs and childcare programs with an opportunity to build collaborative partnerships for the purpose of providing high quality, comprehensive preschool services to at-risk children and their families. Training and mentoring has been provided for Head Start and childcare program directors to assist them in establishing and maintaining these partnerships. The series of training and mentoring sessions has allowed Head Start and childcare providers to come together in a climate of partnership to: 1) design the partnership process from planning to maintenance; 2) train childcare administrators in Head Start performance standards; 3) build trust and foster mutual respect; and 4) create a climate of collaboration and creativity.

- ***The Georgia Professional Development Initiative*** is a partnership between the Office of School Readiness, the Georgia Department of Technical and Adult Education, the Georgia Child Care Council, the Department of Human Resources, the Georgia Early Learning Initiative, the Region IV Administration for Children and Families and Quality Assist, Inc. The purpose of this initiative is to assist staff that work in Head Start, Pre-K and other early care and education programs to complete their education and improve their qualifications to work with young children.

- ***The Family Services/Resource Coordination Training Initiative*** is a collaborative training model, developed by the Georgia Office of School Readiness, to provide high-quality training for Head Start Family Services Workers and state-funded Pre-K Resource Coordinators. The model has trained over 1,000 staff in both programs

that work with families of children enrolled in Pre-K and Head Start programs in Georgia.

- ***The OSR-Head Start Early Childhood Literacy Initiative*** - OSR developed a partnership with the Region IV Head Start Quality Improvement Center and the Region IV Administration for Children and Families to sponsor an historic early childhood literacy conference. This conference, which was held in Atlanta May 5-8, 2003, was titled "Southern Stories: Early Literacy Traditions for Young Children." Over 1,000 Pre-K, Head Start and childcare teachers attended the conference from Georgia and the southeast region.

- ***The Head Start Strategic Planning Initiative*** - OSR developed a partnership with the Georgia Head Start Association; the Federal Region IV Administration for Children and Families and Quality Assist, Inc. to design and facilitate the "Head Start Strategic Planning Initiative" in December, 1999. The purpose of this initiative, which is now in its fourth year, is to develop and implement a state-wide strategic plan for Head Start programs in Georgia which addresses six major areas: 1) professional development; 2) state licensure; 3) national accreditation; 4) expansion of services; 5) positive child outcomes; and 6) technology.

All of these initiatives that I have mentioned reflect the mutual commitment of the Office of School Readiness and Georgia Head Start programs to federal-state partnerships that not only maximize the use of our respective resources, but more importantly provide high quality training for Pre-K and Head Start staff and improved services to preschool children and families.

Lastly, I would like to comment briefly on Title II of the "School Readiness Act of 2003" that addresses the concept of a "demonstration program" that would allow a limited number of states the opportunity to integrate state-funded preschool programs with Head Start.

In Georgia, we recognize that the details of this innovative concept are still being worked out and that the success of any "state demonstration program" will rest in large measure on the combined efforts of the Head Start community and its state partners to design a plan that is acceptable to everyone. It is our opinion that no "state demonstration program" will be successful unless there is a true spirit of cooperation and collaboration between Head Start and its state partners.

Based on our historical relationship with Head Start, the success of our collaborative partnerships over the past 10 years and the visionary leadership of our Governor, Georgia welcomes the opportunity - if it should present itself - to participate in this "state demonstration program."

I would like to assure the House Committee on Education and the Workforce, the Bush Administration and our Head Start colleagues that should Georgia be selected to participate in this "state demonstration program", we will adhere to four very important guiding principles in the development and implementation of this "demonstration program":

1. Georgia is committed to being the best possible steward of the federal Head Start funds that come to our state;
2. Georgia will continue to honor the legacy and philosophy of Head Start in the implementation of the program;
3. Georgia is committed to maintaining rigorous standards for Head Start, including comprehensive high quality services to children and their families; services to children with disabilities and a "maintenance of effort" that ensures that there will be no reduction in the number of low-income children and families served in the Georgia demonstration program; and
4. Georgia is committed to conducting a thorough, independent evaluation of the "demonstration program" to measure its impact on the quality of services provided to low-income children and families and the "readiness" of children enrolled in the program to be successful as they enter school.

In closing, I would like to thank the Committee and its membership for the opportunity to share with each of you this morning examples of the innovative partnerships the Georgia Office of School Readiness has developed with its Head Start partners over the past 10 years. In addition, we are thankful for the opportunity to express our support of and respect for the work that Head Start has done on behalf of millions of low-income children and their families during its rich history.

We are confident that the work that the Georgia Pre-K program has done over the past 10 years, coupled with the work of our Head Start partners, has resulted in measurable improvements in the lives of the children and families of our state and we look forward to our continued work together for the benefit of our state's youngest citizens.

APPENDIX F – WRITTEN STATEMENT OF HELGA LEMKE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, COMMUNITY ACTION PARTNERSHIP OF SONOMA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

Testimony of Helga Lemke
Executive Director, Community Action Partnership of Sonoma County

Before the

SUBCOMMITTEE ON EDUCATION REFORM
Committee on Education and the Workforce
U.S. House of Representatives

Hearing on H.R. 2210, the "School Readiness Act of 2003"

June 3, 2003

Good morning Chairman Castle, Ranking Member Woolsey, and Members of the Committee. Thank you for offering me the opportunity to speak today on behalf of Head Start. I would like to begin my testimony with a story.

A few months ago Cori, a Head Start employee, started an agency training session by describing her experience with Head Start. She began by saying that she first came to Head Start at a low point in her life. She was a single parent, without a support system, and with very little money. She had just completed a recovery program and was seeking to put her life back together. She was referred to Head Start by an agency she was working with. She enrolled her daughter and with some nervousness arrived at a neighborhood Head Start for the first day of the program. The Head Start Teacher welcomed her, hugged her, and said, "We're so happy you and your daughter are here. We need parents like you." This, she said, was the beginning of a new life for her. It was literally the first time in years that she felt needed, comfortable, and good about herself and her life.

Cori went on to volunteer for Head Start. With staff support and encouragement she completed an AA degree in early childhood development because, as she says, "my goal was to give back to Head Start all they had given to me." Cori has been a Head Start employee for the past three years. Her current goal is to get a BA degree. In her application for a scholarship she wrote: "I am a single parent. I support my two children by myself both physically and financially. I believe that because I am their role model, by continuing my education it will show them that this is something I value. I want to increase my value and earning power in my career. Head Start supports further education by providing paid educational release time."

My name is Helga Lemke. For the last 14 years I have served as the Executive Director of Community Action Partnership of Sonoma County, in California. Community Action Partnership is a Community Action Agency whose mission is to help low-income people become self-sufficient. Our programs include youth services, housing and homeless programs, a children's health clinic, YouthBuild, and Head Start. We serve 550 Head Start children and families and 32 infants and toddlers through our Early Head Start program.

Cori, whose story I just told you, is one of our program's shining successes. But she is only one of many. I have worked with Head Start for over 20 years and consider it to be one of the most effective child development programs in the country.

How Do We Know that Head Start is Successful?

The results speak for themselves. Research confirms what Head Start parents say – this program changes the lives of children, parents and the families served by it. We know that Head Start prepares children to learn in school. For example:

- The Family and Child Experiences Survey (FACES), an ongoing, national, longitudinal study of the development of Head Start children, the characteristics of their families and the quality of Head Start classrooms, concluded that the program narrows the gap between disadvantaged children and all children in vocabulary and writing skills; Head Start children are leaving the program "ready to learn"; and once in kindergarten, Head Start graduates make substantial progress in word knowledge, letter recognition, math skills, and writing skills relative to national norms. (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2001, January). *Head Start FACES: Longitudinal Findings on Program Performance.* Third Progress Report, iii.)

- Head Start children are less likely to fall behind in school or become a burden on society. (Barnett, W.S. (September 2002). *The Battle Over Head Start: What the Research Shows.* Presentation at a Science and Public Policy Briefing Sponsored by the Federation of Behavioral, Psychological, and Cognitive Sciences; Garces, E., Thomas D., and Currie, J. (September 2002). Longer-Term Effects on Head Start. *The American Economic Review.* 92, 4:999-1012.)

- Head Start children stay in school and also achieve more as adults. (Id.)

The gains that Head Start children make are remarkable when one considers the formidable barriers they face:

- Almost half of all Head Start parents make less than $12,000 a year.

- Almost 25% of all children served in Head Start come from homes where English is not the primary language.

- Almost one in every 6 Head Start children has one or more disabilities – generally a speech or language impairment. Nearly half of all children's disabilities were identified after these children entered Head Start, a clear demonstration of how important the health component of Head Start is for the future of these children.

Why is Head Start So Successful?

Head Start is successful because of the way it's designed and administered. I will briefly touch on four key elements that contribute to the success of the Head Start program.

Comprehensive Services. The first element is comprehensive services. Those who work day in and day out with the poor know that poverty is complicated. Limited education, inadequate health care, lack of support systems, low self esteem, poor parenting skills, domestic violence – these are only some of the issues that contribute to sustained poverty. The founders of Head Start understood that an effective program designed to help poor children overcome these barriers had to be comprehensive and that a parent who feels inadequate and has not graduated from high school (as is true for more than a quarter of Head Start parents) may find it difficult in turn to nurture a child's self confidence and educational growth.

Head Start was designed with these factors in mind. As a result, it uses a comprehensive, multifaceted approach emphasizing education, mental and physical health screenings, nutritious meals, social services for families, and parent involvement.

Collaboration. The second key element of Head Start's program design is collaboration. Head Start is a model of collaboration and partnership -- with other programs within an organization, with the community, and with the private and public sectors. Let me give you some examples. First, our Head Start program works closely with and benefits from our Community Action Agency's other programs, especially the health and housing programs. We have a children's health center whose nurse works with our teenage Head Start moms and our infants/toddlers. We also have a rental assistance program, landlord/tenant counseling and emergency/transitional housing – all critical services for families who live in Sonoma County, the fourth least affordable place in the country to live.

Our Head Start program has more than 50 formalized collaborative agreements with community organizations in such areas as child care, mental and physical health services, special education, family resources, and so forth. Head Start is part of a school readiness initiative that our agency developed in partnership with local public schools. One component of our Early Head Start program focuses on teenage moms who are part of a County Office of Education teenage pregnancy program.

The third level of collaboration takes place at the state level. In California, the State Department of Education and Head Start work closely together by planning and coordinating trainings, disseminating a child development bulletin, and making available a resource book – all of this for both state preschool and Head Start programs. There is certainly room for greater collaboration. But, I don't believe it is necessary to jeopardize all that is right with Head Start to accomplish this goal. Such an objective most certainly CAN be accomplished within the existing structure of the Head Start program.

Quality and Accountability. The third key characteristic of the Head Start program is its quality and accountability. The Head Start **performance standards** are a comprehensive, detailed set of standards that address every aspect of what the research tells us is necessary to help prepare at-risk children for a lifetime of learning -- child development, literacy, health, nutrition, community collaboration, parent involvement, etc.

Each year every Head Start grantee is required to undertake a thorough prescribed self-assessment conducted by staff, Policy Council members and the grantee's Board. Every three years there is a weeklong monitoring that is conducted by an outside team of specialists. There is no other funding source I know of that has such rigorous requirements.

At the heart of any discussion about quality and accountability are the children. How well are they doing? There has been much discussion recently about testing.

Starting this fall, the Administration on Youth and Families plans to require the testing of all Head Start children. I believe testing is an inappropriate goal for a number of reasons. Experts point out that three and four year olds may test markedly differently from one day to the next, depending on whether they are sick, having a bad day or angry at their mother. The idea of developing a reliable standardized test for all Head Start three and four year olds – one that is linguistically and culturally appropriate – is daunting. Such a test would take years, not months to develop, test and refine.

The current Head Start approach to assessing a child is, in our opinion, much more effective. Using a standardized, validated tool, assessments take place three times a year – at the beginning of the year to establish a baseline, in the middle of the year, and at the end of the year. Teachers plan relevant activities for the children. They then observe the children as they are naturally going about these activities – looking at a picture book, playing with blocks, playing pretend cooking, and so on. Teachers note how the child is doing, where he/she is hesitant, and make other observations. Results are shared with parents and activities at home are suggested to help the children develop and/or improve specific skills. This kind of assessment is likely to be far more accurate and productive than sitting a child down in an artificially created situation for 20 - 30 minutes and drawing results from that short period of time.

Continuing Improvement. The fourth key element of Head Start is the program's emphasis on continual improvement. This is part of the Head Start culture. Head Start staff accept that change is a constant. They come back from Head Start trainings energized and ready to implement new approaches or take advantage of the most recent research in child development or, for example, creating language rich environments.

As is true in any program or any company, there always is room for improvement. Our agency has put a real emphasis on improving teacher qualifications. We provide educational release time, assistance with books and registration costs, and a career track to help our teachers get an Associate Degree or better. We have surpassed the national goal of having 50 percent of Head Start teachers with an Associate Degree by September 2003, and support the recommendation to set a goal of 100 percent by 2008.

It is important that we invest in teacher training and the teachers themselves. Funds should be dedicated to helping Head Start teachers achieve Bachelor's Degrees, whether through loan forgiveness or other means, and to retaining these teachers through appropriate salaries. There should also be support for ongoing training and technical assistance in early literacy and mathematics instruction, approaches to early childhood learning, and social and emotion development of children. Career development plans designed by Head Start programs for their staff could set goals for training and further the commitment to program quality.

Community Action Agencies such as the Community Action Partnership of Sonoma County work with a variety of partners in the community to serve children and families, and enlist the community in defining needs and setting goals. As I mentioned earlier, our Head Start program has more than 50 formalized agreements with organizations throughout the community, and has developed a school readiness initiative with local schools. We would welcome efforts to build upon this experience and support increased collaboration in order to help the children we serve maintain the gains they have made in Head Start as they progress through school.

Transfer of Head Start to States

We oppose the transfer of Head Start to the states, whether in the form of a 50-state block grant, an optional "opt in" program, or by any other configuration. The bottom line is that our neediest children deserve more than a uncertain plan that compromises the integrity of a system that has been proven to work.

Head Start works. Head Start results are impressive. Let's build on the firm foundation we have. A transfer of the program – an optional transfer which some states might apply for and others might not – will result in a mishmash of programs, some operated by the states, some by the federal government, diluted resources, inconsistent standards and compromised training and technical assistance. We are aware of no compelling rationale for such a dramatic dismantling of Head Start as we know it.

Our specific concerns are as follows:

1. The importance of Head Start as a national program can not be overstated. Head Start was created as a national program because most states were neglecting their poor children. It was designed to ensure the same program design and standards of quality in every state in the country. That goal is as important today as it was then, especially since only three states have adopted the stringent quality standards that equal those of Head Start. (Walter Gilliam, PhD, and Carol Ripple, PhD, "What Can Be Learned From State-Funded Prekindergarten Initiatives? A Data-Based Approach to the Head Start Devolution Debate.")

2. Head Start's strength lies in its performance standards, which guarantee quality, the comprehensive nature of services and family involvement. Supporters of the concept of turning Head Start over to the states maintain that any state that accepts Head Start funds will have to preserve the integrity of the program. However (and this is key), **the language in Title II of H.R. 2210 is so vague as to be meaningless. There are no guarantees and there are no requirements for performance standards or enforcement mechanisms. There are no specific minimum standards re: class size, student-teacher ratio or teacher education.**

3. Preschool programs do not have the history or experience or requirement of parental involvement. Nor do they offer comprehensive services. In California, many state preschool program operators consider the Head Start program to be an enviable model.

4. Cash-strapped states cannot be relied upon to maintain the quality and comprehensive services of Head Start. California has a $38 billion deficit. The State is talking about borrowing money to pay the interest on money it has borrowed. School budgets are being slashed at every level. In our county some schools are facing bankruptcy. Governor Davis has threatened to slash child care funds. In Oregon schools are closing 17 days early to save money. It is inevitable that states will look eagerly and hungrily at Head Start dollars to help cover the costs of child care and other programs. H.R. 2210 requires no financial commitment from states – short term or long term – to make and keep this program a priority.

5. It is also inevitable that if this program is turned over to the states, federal funding will decline over time. Experience suggests that the less directly involved the federal government is and the more removed it is from a program, the less interest it has in funding the program. We assume the same will be true of Head Start if it is turned over to the states. States already are well acquainted with mandated services unaccompanied by federal dollars and often are unable to come up with the necessary funding to meet the costs of the program.

Conclusion

For nearly 40 years, Head Start has been the first step on the path of educational achievement of America's neediest children and their families. Its mission is simple: to prepare children to succeed in school and to give them the tools necessary to achieve their goals in life. The Head Start community is deeply distressed that the futures of our neediest children now are in danger of being politicized in the reauthorization of the Head Start Act. Throughout its history, Administrations and Congresses of all political stripes have worked side-by-side with the Head Start community and other interested parties to strengthen and improve the program so that it delivers what it promises: a head start in life for at-risk children.

We support the goals for quality improvement and strengthened collaboration among programs in Title I of H.R. 2210, and hope that they are accompanied by adequate investments that will allow these efforts to succeed. Turning Head Start over to the states, however, in the manner outlined in Title II, will only serve to undermine the progress we have achieved, and threaten the local programs that our community, and thousand like them around the country, have come to depend upon.

Thank you for this opportunity to share these views on Head Start reauthorization on behalf of Community Action Partnership of Sonoma County. I will be pleased to answer any questions you may have.

APPENDIX G – DOCUMENT SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD BY RANKING MINORITY MEMBER LYNN WOOLSEY: LETTER WRITTEN BY WINDY HILL, ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER, HEAD START BUREAU, ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
Head Start Bureau
330 C Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20447

Dear Head Start Colleagues,

Recently, a document about the Administration's proposal to offer states greater flexibility in coordinating preschool services, including Head Start, was sent to Head Start programs for circulation to Head Start parents by the Governmental Affairs arm of a Head Start advocacy group. The Head Start Bureau continues to recognize and celebrate the importance of effective two-way communication between staff and parents and sharing of information and materials that empower and support the role of parents in shared decision-making. At the same time, it seems appropriate to again share with you, your staff, governing boards and policy councils and parents, long-standing Federal and Head Start Bureau policy regarding political activities.

Your political activities are governed and, in many ways, restricted or limited by Federal law. A little over 16 years ago the Head Start Bureau issued an Information Memorandum to all Grantees and Delegate Agencies outlining these restrictions and providing reference to the source of these restrictions. For your convenience, I've attached a copy of that IM. Although ACYF-IM-87-03 is now over 16 years old the basic guidance remains applicable. Your participation in political activities is still governed by the pertinent sections of the Federal laws referenced in the Information Memorandum. Section 656(a) of the current Head Start Act, Public Law 105-285, still specifies that employees of Head Start programs are covered by the provisions of the Hatch Act that prohibit certain political activities. Section 656(b) of the same Head Start Act proscribes the use of programs funds, personnel or services to support any partisan or non-partisan political activity. Further, the latest revision to the Assurances Certification (OMB Circular A-102) that programs submit as part of their grant application package still asserts that the program will comply with the provisions of the Hatch Act regarding restrictions to political activities or lobbying activities.

Simply stated, the request by the advocacy group appears to encourage Head Start programs to use Head Start program funds and/or staff in a manner that is in direct violation of the laws that govern your political activities. If information will be or has been disseminated pursuant to a request from an advocacy group, that dissemination would constitute promotion of lobbying, which is a prohibited use of Federal funds. If a grantee has done this, it must prove that Federal funds, or resources purchased with those funds—such as Head Start staff time and facilities—were not used as requested by the advocacy group.

The coming months will be challenging ones for all of us in the Head Start community as Congress holds hearings to examine the merits of the President's vision for a Head Start program that provides more emphasis on early learning and promotes the best methods for preparing children for success in school. There is no question that the reauthorization process will make unusual demands on each of us. However, I am confident that we are all equal to the challenge.

Sincerely,

Windy M. Hill
Associate Commissioner
Head Start Bureau

Attachment: ACYF-IM-87-03

APPENDIX H – DOCUMENT SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD BY RANKING MINORITY MEMBER LYNN WOOLSEY: RESPONSE WRITTEN BY SARAH GREENE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, NATIONAL HEAD START ASSOCIATION; TO A LETTER WRITTEN BY WINDY HILL, ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER, HEAD START BUREAU, ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICE

May 27, 2003

VIA FACSIMILE

Windy M. Hill
Associate Commissioner
Head Start Bureau
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
330 C Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20447

Re: Dear Colleague Letter of May 8, 2003

Dear Ms. Hill:

I am writing to you in regard to the letter that you sent to all Head Start programs on May 8, 2003, in which you refer to an advocacy group (presumably NHSA) and accuse that group of "encourag[ing] Head Start programs to use Head Start program funds and/or staff in a manner that is in direct violation of the laws that govern [their] political activities."

Needless to say, NHSA takes your accusation very seriously. After receiving many distress calls about your letter from numerous Head Start programs, I have ample reason to believe the letter's references to legal requirements such as the Hatch Act and its vague accusation of impropriety have had the effect of chilling the exercise of free expression by Head Start programs and their representatives - - staff, parents and board members. Indeed, stating that certain unspecified "political" activity, if carried out, could violate federal law while, at the same time, providing no clear guidance on what is and what is not lawful (certainly the attached IM provides no guidance at all to programs but only quotes passages from statutes and regulations) appears designed to produce such a chilling effect.

It is and always has been NHSA's understanding that expression of views on legislation (under consideration or already enacted) is protected by the First Amendment of the Constitution and that there is no "restriction or limitation" (using the terms from your letter) on a Head Start program or its staff, parents, or board members from expressing views on legislation to Members of Congress (or their staffs), to the Press, or to others in their communities provided they do not use federal funds in expressing those views the process.

The foregoing understanding is based on years of discussions with federal officials over what Head Start programs may and may not do under applicable law and

regulation. We assume that you agree with it. Considering the Constitutional implications of restricting the free expression of views on legislation, we cannot imagine that you disagree with our position that the only applicable restriction is on the use of federal funds. However, considering the concerns your letter has raised, a statement to that effect now is needed to assure Head Start agencies that they may freely express their views about the changes to Head Start legislation that have been, or may be, advanced during the reauthorization process.

If we are incorrect, however, and you do not agree with our understanding, we would appreciate clarification from your office on what, specifically, the restrictions on the ability of Head Start agencies, staff, parents and board members to express their views on the reauthorization process (or other pending legislation) are.

As you know, reauthorization will soon be completed; in the next few weeks, or months a final proposal will come to a vote. Accordingly, the ability of Head Start programs and their representatives to express their views during the time such views can be considered by the Congress is short. Your response is urgently needed. We would therefore hope to receive your reply within no longer than a week.

Thank you in advance for your quick attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Sarah M. Greene

APPENDIX I – DOCUMENT SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD BY CHAIRMAN MICHAEL N. CASTLE, SUBCOMMITTEE ON EDUCATION REFORM, COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE, U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES: LETTER WRITTEN BY COUNCIL OF CHIEF STATE SCHOOL OFFICERS

COUNCIL OF CHIEF STATE SCHOOL OFFICERS
ONE MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE, N.W., SUITE 700 · WASHINGTON, DC 20001-1431
202 336 7000 TEL · 202 408 8072 FAX
WWW.CCSSO.ORG

June 2, 2003

The Honorable Michael N. Castle
Subcommittee on Education Reform
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Castle:

On behalf of the Council of Chief State School Officers, representing the nation's state superintendents and commissioners of education, I am writing to express our support for the reforms envisioned by the *School Readiness Act of 2003*. Since its inception in 1965, Head Start has targeted resources to young children with the greatest needs. The program provides health, educational, nutritional, and social services that most disadvantaged children would not otherwise receive. We are pleased that H.R. 2210 maintains the current comprehensive approach to Head Start while at the same time providing a strengthened focus on school readiness. If adequate resources were provided to implement the goals of the School Readiness Act, early childhood educators would have the tools they need to prepare each child for academic success.

The Council of Chief State School Officers is a long time supporter of Head Start. For decades, our organization has advocated on behalf of strengthening the program and increasing our investment in early childhood services. In spite of the great work of many Head Start programs throughout the nation, too many children arrive at school without the skills necessary to achieve. We applaud the School Readiness Act for establishing a uniform state planning mechanism that would insist upon greater collaboration at every level of the Head Start program. We also appreciate that H.R. 2210 ensures early childhood educational programs are aligned the standards of No Child Left Behind. If children enter kindergarten with the appropriate skills, it will be easier to make progress on the goals of NCLB.

As we work to improve the quality of early childhood education, no reform will realize greater results than raising degree and certification expectations. Research tells us that requiring teachers to be appropriately degreed and certified will dramatically improve cognitive development, language, prereading, and prematheatical skills in our young children as well as their social skills and emotional well-being.

We are encouraged by the bill's emphasis on higher teacher qualifications and professional development, and we applaud the decision to establish minimum degree

G. Thomas Houlihan
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

requirements. By increasing the set-aside for compensation and quality improvement to sixty percent, the bill would help Head Start programs hire more-highly qualified teachers. However, according to the Department of Health and Human Services, 72 percent of Head Start teachers have not attained their bachelor's degree. States will not be able to meet the new expectations without major investments in teacher salaries, recruiting efforts, and professional development. According to the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER), "research confirms that preschool teacher quality is strongly linked to compensation. Poor pay and benefits make it difficult to recruit and hire professionally-qualified early education teachers." Unfortunately, HR 2210 does not authorize funding sufficient to provide adequate compensation and training at a level that would follow through on the goal of a highly trained early childhood workforce. We recommend that the authorization level be substantially increased during the reauthorization process.

The members of our organization are pleased by the proposal for a state demonstration program in the new Title II of Head Start. Unlike most education programs, Head Start has not previously benefited from a coordinated and unified statewide effort. By empowering each state to reform their Head Start programs, we will be assured greater consistency among programs and the cost benefit of a statewide system. Furthermore, each state opting to participate in the demonstration program will be required to emphasize parental involvement as well as maintaining a focus on physical development, health, nutritional programs, and social services.

Unfortunately, the Title II proposal has been unfairly criticized as a "block grant" that would dismantle Head Start. These accusations are not consistent with the substance of HR 2210, nor are they consistent with congressional intent. Neither Congress nor the states want to dismantle Head Start or eliminate its critical components. Concerns have been raised that states would use the new Title II as a mechanism for lowering standards. In fact, states are looking forward to the new Title II as an opportunity to raise the caliber of early childhood education programs in their states.

States have independently been doing commendable work in recent years to improve early childhood service delivery, and are not looking to lower standards for their early childhood programs. To the contrary, many existing state early learning standards exceed the requirements of the Head Start program. According to NIEER, "Preschool programs operated by public schools employ the best-educated teachers. Nearly 90% of preschool teachers in public school programs have at least a four-year college degree. Typically they have degrees that require specialized preparation in early childhood education." Based on the proven performance of state pre-K systems, Title II would entrust states to raise the bar for early childhood programs and develop cohesive, rational systems serving their youngest learners.

Under the new demonstration program, each state is required to appoint a lead agency to oversee Head Start collaboration. States are accustomed to dealing with federal programs administered statewide, and they have the oversight experience that is necessary for

successful Head Start programs. SEAs also have the educational expertise necessary to ensure successful implementation of the new school readiness provisions.

Because of the heightened focus on school readiness, we recommend that the state education agency be given a "right of first refusal" to act as the lead agency. State constitutions deliberately vest authority for education programs in SEAs. Although governors will decide whether or not to participate in the demonstration program, once that decision is made, SEAs should be given the option to be the lead agency. By allowing state education agencies to operate the program, we can be assured that the educational standards of each Head Start program are consistent with the state's K-12 educational standards. The demonstration program will unify early learning standards within a state and align them with statewide educational objectives.

Additionally, we ask that the final bill include assurances that Head Start is not moving toward a single national assessment. Although H.R. 2210 does not address assessments, a National Reporting System is being developed under current authorization. Each state should have the flexibility to create its own accountability system and should be given the option to use its own assessment. One of the benefits of the H.R. 2210 is that it would result in greater alignment between early childhood services and K-12 educational standards. Since those educational standards are different in each state, we cannot expect a single national test to adequately assess progress against state standards.

The School Readiness Act of 2003 is an excellent starting point for this year's reauthorization of Head Start and we commend you for bringing attention to the critical role of early childhood services. We look forward to working with you as the reauthorization process continues.

Sincerely,

Patricia Sullivan

Patricia Sullivan
Deputy Executive Director

APPENDIX J – DOCUMENT SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD BY CHAIRMAN MICHAEL N. CASTLE, SUBCOMMITTEE ON EDUCATION REFORM, COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE, U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES: STATEMENT OF THE BUSINESS ROUNDTABLE ON THE "SCHOOL READINESS ACT OF 2003"

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 22, 2003

CONTACT: **Tita Thompson**
(202) 872-1260

STATEMENT BY THE BUSINESS ROUNDTABLE ON THE SCHOOL READINESS ACT OF 2003

Washington, DC – John J. Castellani, President of The Business Roundtable (BRT), today issued the following statement on the School Readiness Act of 2003:

"The Business Roundtable welcomes the School Readiness Act of 2003, introduced today by Republicans on the House Committee on Education and the Workforce. As the first legislative proposal for the reauthorization of Head Start introduced in Congress this year, the bill is a strong starting point for discussing how we can improve Head Start's role in preparing disadvantaged children for success in school. We urge members of both parties to work together to achieve this critically important goal.

"The BRT and Corporate Voices for Working Families recently released a set of six principles that should guide the development of successful early childhood education systems. The School Readiness Act of 2003, authored by Rep. Mike Castle, reflects many of those principles, including a greater focus on learning and teacher quality.

"As other members of the House and Senate introduce their plans to reauthorize Head Start, we look forward to working with the Congress and the Administration to help strengthen this investment in our children's and our nation's future."

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The Business Roundtable is an association of chief executive officers of leading corporations with a combined workforce of more than 10 million employees in the United States and $3.7 trillion in annual revenues. The chief executives are committed to advocating public policies that foster vigorous economic growth and a dynamic global economy.

Early Childhood Education: A Call to Action from the Business Community

Why America Needs High-Quality Early Childhood Education

Over the past two decades, business leaders have invested time, expertise, and resources in efforts to improve K-12 education in the United States. What we have learned leads us to conclude that America's continuing efforts to improve education and develop a world-class workforce will be hampered without a federal and state commitment to early childhood education for 3- and 4-year-old children.

As states implement the No Child Left Behind Act, designed to ensure that all students are proficient in reading and math by 2013-14, we also need to ensure that children enter school ready and able to succeed. Research shows, however, that far too many children enter school ill-prepared.

Studies document a wide gap between lower- and higher- income children before they enter kindergarten. When children begin school behind, they tend to continue to fall further and further behind. High-quality early childhood education can help close this gap. Long-term positive outcomes and cost-savings include improved school performance, reduced special education placement, lower school dropout rates, and increased lifelong earning potential (see the Appendix for a summary of this research).

Not only does high-quality early childhood education make a difference for children, it matters to their employed parents. Employers increasingly find that the availability of good early childhood programs is critical to the recruitment and retention of parent employees.

In today's world, where education and skill levels determine future earnings, the economic and social costs to individuals, communities, and the nation of not taking action on early childhood education are far too great to ignore, especially when the benefits far outweigh the costs. Estimates of the return on investment of high-quality programs for low-income children range from $4 to $7 for every $1 spent. However the research is clear: the return on investment is linked to quality; simply increasing participation without ensuring program quality will not produce positive results.

As business leaders, we see the discussion around early childhood programs for 3- and 4-year-olds as largely an education issue. Since states have primary responsibility for education, we believe that states need to take the lead in developing and funding a coherent early childhood education system from the patchwork of programs and services that exist today. The federal government also must play a leadership role. It must make high-quality early childhood education a national priority, and continue its historic role in focusing on the children most in need. Federal and state investments in early education must be coordinated in order to improve program quality and to serve more children.

Statement of Principles

The Business Roundtable (BRT) and Corporate Voices for Working Families (CVWF) believe federal and state efforts to develop early childhood education systems for 3- and 4-year-olds must be based on a set of guiding Principles that define the components of a successful system and high-quality programs. These Principles draw on current early childhood research, lessons from K-12 education reform efforts, and applicable lessons from the nation's experience in building a voluntary system of higher education. Although our focus is on 3- and 4-year-old children, we fully recognize the importance of quality improvement efforts for early childhood programs serving children under 3.

The six principles below are interconnected; they are not listed in priority order. BRT, CVWF, and others will use these Principles to assess existing early education programs, consider philanthropic priorities, evaluate policy proposals on Pre-K, Head Start, and other programs, and formulate policy positions.

1. LEARNING. *A successful early childhood education system* views children's learning as the central mission. It should:

- Provide positive learning experiences that foster the interconnections among children's social, emotional, and cognitive development and nurture children's innate joy in learning;
- Engage children in developmentally appropriate experiences with English language literacy and numeracy, and encourage family literacy programs to reinforce these experiences;
- Hold the same high expectations for success for all children while also respecting and supporting the diversity of children's families, cultures, races, socio-economic backgrounds, as well as the different ways that young children learn and the rates at which they progress; and
- Include healthy nutrition, safe environments, facilities conducive to learning, and diagnostic screening with effective follow-up services to treat disabilities or health problems that might affect children's ability to learn.

2. STANDARDS. *A successful early childhood education system* articulates standards for children's learning and program quality that align with state K-12 academic standards. It should:

- Align the objectives of the early childhood education system and the state's standards in the early grades of school;
- Adopt research-based curriculum options and program standards that enable early childhood education to achieve and sustain results for children;
- Endorse research-based indicators for what children need to know and be able to do when they enter school that respect the diverse ways that children grow and learn; and
- Use the results of regular and appropriate diagnostic assessments of children's performance to improve instructional practice.

3. **TEACHERS.** ***A successful early childhood education system*** **ensures that teaching staff possess the skills, knowledge, and attitudes to help young children enter school prepared to succeed. It should:**

   - Employ skilled teaching staff who have a college degree and/or demonstrated knowledge and skill commensurate with the requirements of the position and meet performance criteria such as English verbal skills and the ability to connect with and teach young children;

   - Require effective preparation as well as ongoing professional development that helps staff improve the quality of their teaching, become ongoing learners, and move through an articulated, degree-granting system, where appropriate; and

   - Institute differentiated salaries based on the experience and competencies of teachers that, given the importance of consistent relationships to children's learning, are adequate to attract and retain a qualified teaching staff.

4. **PARENTS.** ***A successful early childhood education system*** **supports parents as their children's first teachers and provides high-quality program options to parents who choose to enroll their children. It should:**

   - Provide access to high-quality early childhood programs for families seeking out-of-home early childhood education for their 3- and 4-year-old children, regardless of their socio-economic status;

   - Offer seamless ways to meet the need of some families for care during the time they are working as well as the need for early learning experiences for their children; and

   - Promote practical and effective strategies for parents to be involved in and support their children's learning at home and in early education programs.

5. **ACCOUNTABILITY.** ***A successful early childhood education system*** **embraces accountability for measurable results. It should:**

   - Collect the data and conduct the research needed to identify best practices, assess system performance, and report these results to stakeholders;

   - Evaluate the progress of children who have participated in early childhood education programs on the state's annual assessments required by the No Child Left Behind Act;

   - Implement continuous improvement processes that put the lessons learned from research and evaluation into program standards and practice; and

   - Establish incentives for meeting or exceeding objectives as well as consequences for persistent failure to achieve intended outcomes for children.

6. **PARTNERSHIPS.** ***A successful early childhood education system*** **builds crosscutting partnerships to govern, finance, sustain, and improve the system. It should:**

- Create effective and efficient governance mechanisms that support community planning, program development and oversight;
- Involve key stakeholders at the federal, state, and local levels, and encourage public/private partnerships to improve effectiveness, efficiency, and accessibility;
- Include participation among all sectors of the early childhood field within the state, including public and private programs as well as those that take place in schools, centers, and homes; and
- Insist on adequate, efficient, and shared financing mechanisms that minimize duplication of effort and identify priorities for public investments in times of budgetary constraints as well as a blueprint for future expansion.

From Principles to Policy

In 1990, the nation's governors and the Administration set as their first National Education Goal, "By the year 2000, all children will start school ready to learn." Thirteen years later, there has been progress—45 states are now providing some early childhood education services and programs, using both federal and state funding sources. The reality of today's families—including those with working parents and those with a parent at home—is that 69 percent of 3-year-old children and 82 percent of 4-year-old children are in some form of early childhood program on a regular basis. Yet most of these programs are not high quality, despite the research that shows that only high-quality programs produce a strong return on investment. Thus, the goal of school readiness remains largely unmet.

Three groundbreaking initiatives pave the way toward realizing this goal. Two reports by the National Research Council of the National Academy of Sciences summarize current research on early development and early learning: *From Neurons to Neighborhood: Applying the Science of Early Childhood Development* in 2000 and *Eager to Learn: Educating Our Preschoolers* in 2001. In addition, the Committee for Economic Development developed a vision for applying this knowledge in its publication, *Preschool for All: Investing in a Productive and Just Society* in 2002.

The Principles outlined in this statement take us the next step in formulating federal and state policies. As noted earlier, education is largely a state responsibility, but the federal government has always played a very significant financial role in early childhood programs and must continue to do so. Although the federal role in early childhood is different from its role in K-12 and higher education, policymakers should examine relevant lessons from federal initiatives that have strengthened both higher education and K-12 education.

In higher education, the federal government's first priority is to help low-income students gain access to postsecondary studies. The federal government also helped states build a voluntary higher education system that is the envy of the rest of the world. The federal government could take a similar role in the early childhood arena, supporting low-income children's participation in high-quality programs while also helping states to build the infrastructure for high-quality programs—including building staff capacity.

In elementary and secondary (K-12) education, the federal government only provides 7 percent of the overall resources, but influences the entire system because these resources link their assistance for low-income students in low-performing schools with requirements for rigorous state accountability systems that include all students. Although early childhood education is very different from the public K-12 system because it is has a higher percent of federal funding and a mix of public and private providers, we believe that the federal government could use a similar model of linking resources with accountability by pairing federal investments with requirements for strong state accountability systems that measure results, ensure high program standards, and expand the numbers of children served.

We are well aware that economic conditions, budgets, and political considerations can hinder or hasten domestic policy initiatives. But even in uncertain times, we can begin to plan for the future. We urge decision makers in the public and private sectors—the U.S. Congress, the Administration, local and state governments, school boards, the business community, and other leaders —to make early childhood education a high priority by supporting and endorsing these Principles and launching a multi-sector planning process to identify incremental and additional revenue streams required for implementation. BRT and CVWF are committed to working with all stakeholders to build a quality early learning system for today's and tomorrow's young children.

About The Business Roundtable

The Business Roundtable (BRT) is an association of 150 chief executive officers of leading corporations committed to advocating public policies that foster vigorous economic growth and a dynamic global economy. In 1990, the BRT adopted a nine-point policy agenda, "Essential Components of a Successful Education System," which outlined the framework for standards-based education reform. One of the nine essential components includes high-quality pre-kindergarten education for disadvantaged children. BRT member companies created or joined state business coalitions to promote higher standards, and business leadership has been a critical factor in many of the states that have significantly improved student achievement. The BRT also strongly supported the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, which creates a national imperative to raise student achievement and close the achievement gap, and the Roundtable's Task Force on Education and the Workforce is actively involved in the law's implementation.

About Corporate Voices for Working Families

Corporate Voices for Working Families (CVWF) is a coalition of 36 leading corporations that have been engaged in listening to and addressing the challenges of their employee families for over two decades. The CVWF coalition was created in 2001 to bring this private sector voice and experience into the public dialogue on issues affecting their working families. CVWF is focused on communicating the business case for early learning to policymakers, corporations, and other stakeholders interested in strengthening working families. CVWF's partner companies believe that the care and education of young children is critical to the attraction, recruitment and engagement of today's parent employees as well as a key to economic growth. CVWF recently released an issue brief outlining why early education is an important business issue.

Appendix: Supporting Research

By the time children enter kindergarten, there already is a wide gap in their readiness for school.

- At age 3, high socio-economic status (SES)[1] children have average vocabularies of 1100 words, middle SES children have average vocabularies of 750 words, and low SES children have average vocabularies of 480 words (Hart and Risley, 1995).

- Lower SES children enter school with much poorer skills in the major areas of development and learning. Average achievement scores for kindergarten children in the highest SES group are 60 percent higher than those in the lowest SES group (Lee and Burkam, 2002).

- Only 47 percent of low SES kindergarteners are likely to have attended a center-based program (including Head Start) prior to kindergarten entry, compared with 66 percent of higher SES children. Moreover, higher SES children have access to higher-quality programs, further benefiting them (Lee and Burkam, 2002).

When children begin kindergarten behind, they continue to fall further and further behind.

- During the kindergarten year, children who are deemed at risk for later school failure because of their family backgrounds make gains in basic skills such as letter recognition, counting, and comparing object size. Yet these children remain farther behind children with fewer at-risk factors because the more advantaged children make even greater gains in reading and math skills in school than their less advantaged counterparts (West, Denton, and Reaney, 2001).

High-quality early childhood programs can make a difference in school readiness despite poverty and other risk factors in children's backgrounds.

- Children, including those of low and high SES, who attend high-quality centers, score significantly higher on measures of skills and abilities that are important for school success compared with children from lower quality centers. While children's abilities are typically related to their families' income level, the quality of the early childhood experiences can make a difference over and above the effects of family characteristics (Bryant, Maxwell, Taylor, Poe, Peisner-Feinberg, and Bernier, 2003).

High-quality early childhood education programs have a high return on investment for low-income children.

- In the short term, longitudinal studies of high-quality early childhood programs, including the Perry Preschool Program, the Abecedarian Early Childhood Intervention Project, and the Chicago Child Parent Center Program find increased achievement test scores, decreased rates of being held back in school, and decreased placement in special education among low-income children. In the

[1] Throughout this report we refer to the effects of socio-economic status (SES) and family income, which are different. In addition to income, SES takes into account such characteristics as parental education and social status.

longer term, studies also find increased high school graduation and decreased crime and delinquency rates (Schweinhart, Barnes, and Weikart, 1993; Campbell, Ramey, Pungello, Sparling, and Miller-Johnson 2002; Reynolds, Temple, Robertson, and Mann, 2001).

- Cost-benefit analyses of Perry Preschool and the Chicago Child Parent Center Programs find a cost savings of $7 for every dollar invested (Barnett, 1996; Reynolds, Temple, Robertson, and Mann, 2002). Cost-benefit analysis of the Abecedarian Early Childhood Intervention Project finds a cost savings of $4 for every dollar invested (Masse and Barnett, 2002).

- When using an internal rate of return, which compares public and private return on investments, high-quality early childhood programs fare well. The internal rate of return for the Perry Preschool Program has been calculated at 16 percent, supporting the notion that early education can be a good investment (Rolnick and Grunewald, 2003).

There is evidence that high-quality programs will benefit middle-class children as well.

- At the beginning of kindergarten, the gap between middle and higher SES children is larger than the gap between lower and middle SES children in achievement scores assessing literacy and mathematics (Lee and Burkam, 2002).

- An indication that middle-class[2] children might substantially benefit from preschool education is that they have relatively high rates of being held back in school and school dropout rates—problems that early childhood education has been found to reduce. Middle-income children have a 12 percent rate of being held back in school compared with 17 percent for low-income children and 8 percent for high-income children. Likewise, middle-income children have an 11 percent school dropout rate, compared with 23 percent for low-income children and 3 percent for high-income children (Barnett, 2003).

High-quality early childhood education is important to business.

- Numerous studies reveal that there is a cost to business in not responding to its employees' need for reliable and good-quality early childhood programs. Employees are likely to miss work when they spend long hours trying to find early childhood programs or when they deal with the often-tenuous arrangements they have, especially when these arrangements fall apart. When employees with these problems are at work, they have difficulty concentrating because they are worried about their children (Galinsky and Johnson, 1998).

- Companies have also found that there are business benefits in providing their own employees assistance with early childhood programs, including improved recruitment and retention (Galinsky and Johnson, 1998; Galinsky and Bond, 1998). Employees with access to family-supportive programs and policies are more likely to be satisfied with their jobs, to be loyal, to go the extra mile to help their companies succeed, and to stay at their jobs (Bond, Galinsky and Swanberg, 1998).

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[2] In this calculation, low-income children are in the bottom 20 percent of family income levels, middle-class children are in the 20-80 percent range, and high-income children are in the top 20 percent.

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APPENDIX K – STATEMENT SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD BY THE HONORABLE TIM MURPHY

Testimony of Congressman Timothy F. Murphy

18th Congressional District of Pennsylvania

Before the

SUBCOMMITTEE ON EDUCATION REFORM

Committee on Education and the Workforce

U.S. House of Representatives

"H.R. 2210, *The School Readiness Act of 2003*"

June 3, 2003

Mr. Chairman, I would first like to commend both the Chairman of the Subcommittee and the Full Committee for their hard work on this legislation and for giving me the opportunity to share my thoughts at this hearing today.

One of the most important challenges our nation faces today is the education of our children, the youth and future of America. As a child psychologist, author, and father, I have a personal and professional interest in helping our young students reach their full potential and go on to be productive and active members of society. In the Pennsylvania Senate, I had the opportunity to help work on many issues surrounding early child

development for all of Pennsylvania's children. I am resolved to continue to speak out for the youth of our nation here in the United States House of Representatives.

Today, Head Start provides services to nearly one million children across the United States and helps pre-schoolers develop the skills necessary to succeed when they enter kindergarten and beyond. Once in kindergarten, Head Start graduates demonstrate that they are ready to learn, making substantial progress in word knowledge, letter recognition, math skills, and writing skills relative to national averages. The learning experiences children have during these years largely determine their abilities and the way they learn, think, and behave the rest of their lives. Furthermore, Head Start children are less likely to be placed in special education or repeat a grade.

Despite these accomplishments, there is more that can be done by serving more children and improvements in the program itself.

In Pennsylvania, there are approximately 65,000 three and four year-old children who are income-eligible for Head Start, and 82,000 children under age three are potential Head Start participants. Because of continual federal support, Pennsylvania is able to reach more students than ever before. It is very important that we continue to provide funding for this vital and successful program so we can reach 100% of the children eligible in the years to come.

I am pleased that H.R. 2210 would authorize a $203 million increase in funding for Head Start, totaling $6.87 billion in FY04 alone. The bill is also designed to strengthen the academic components of the federal Head Start program for disadvantaged children and encourage states to maintain or increase funding for early childhood education.

Let me outline three recommendations I believe would strengthen the legislation before your committee:

1. *Evaluation.* Inaccurate measures of children's abilities runs the risk if increased "false positives" and "false negatives." Sound screening and observational tests should give an accurate description of the child's abilities and needs, and avoid inappropriately labeling or be subject to cultural, economic or racial biases. Anything short of that harms children and provides useless data that is meaningless to parents. And yet, throughout the nation, many early childhood programs use "homemade tests," based on weak – if any – research. Any results from such tests, even if well intentioned, may reflect more of the test maker's bias, rather than the test takers ability.

On the other hand, the field of psychology has developed rigorous standards over the years to reduce these biases. Such research includes careful review of the wording of test questions, strict adherence to administration rules, and even checking the items used in tests for young children to make sure they are devoid of cultural or regional biases. All of these are meant to assure that a child's racial, social-economic, or family background provides no disadvantages to a child's performance.

It is absolutely essential then that any assessment measure used for Head Start be based on proven, scientific and descriptive data. The tests should recognize quality assessments that help identify kids in need, avoid inappropriate labeling and provide valuable input for teachers and classroom instruction. To that end, I suggest wording in this section that references "screening, diagnostic, and classroom observation measures using sound scientific standards which are reliable and valid for preschool children." The terms "reliable and valid" are key terms in the field of psychometrics and indicate that the test results are consistent (reliable), and measure what they are supposed to measure (validity). Any screening measures selected by a state or program should be capable of identifying children who may need further professional evaluation and may then be considered for diagnostic testing. Classroom observations are very important to parents and teachers and offer prescriptive help for parents and teachers alike to measure program accountability.

As a point of information, diagnostic tests are generally administered only by a trained and licensed professional. In researching these tests, they are given to hundreds or thousands of children to determine what performance levels are considered below, average, or above for specific age groups. Those tests are referred to as norm referenced tests. In some cases, these tests are designed to identify childhood disorders. Simply measuring where a child's score falls in reference to an age group would not be sufficient when identifying clinically significant developmental disorders.

In either case, the rigorous research is the basis of "standardizing" a test. Without such research, it is scientifically useless to compare the measurement results of children in one city to another. Any attempts to help parents or teachers understand their child's ability or needs are then open to question. Any attempt to ascertain if Head Start funding makes a difference in children's lives has no reliable nor valid data on which to undergo scientific or legislative scrutiny.

Without such language requiring scientifically based measures, program administrators might be tempted to use unproven, unscientific forms that put their programs in the best possible light, rather than those that might indicate deficiencies or genuine strengths in the program. Additionally, if the data and research will be disclosed to the local communities, it is imperative that the reports depend on quality testing.

2. *Development.* I believe it is important to maintain language that references "social and cognitive development." As general as these terms may appear, they still have significant value in the realm of early childhood education research. They provide the foundation whereby a child's lifelong thinking and reasoning skills are established. The wording of the bill in referencing pre-reading, pre-mathematic, and language instruction introduced are valuable for specific pre-academic skills. Both the general foundation and specific skills, however, are essential components of early childhood education.

3. *State programs.* I firmly believe that Head Start is a quality program and is a model for many state pre-k programs. I would nonetheless like to see stronger safeguards for

states seeking to qualify for the demonstration project. In order to ensure the same level of quality and to protect the current standards set by Head Start, language should be included in Title II to require states to meet or exceed the comprehensive performance standards of Head Start. It is important that these standards not be compromised in any way.

Head Start is a good program, and it can be a great program. I applaud the leadership of the education committee and the President in moving Head Start upward. Those who work diligently for Head Start should be acknowledged for their many accomplishments. They implement high quality programs nationwide and provide for comprehensive child development and family support services to thousands of low-income preschool children and their families.

As we move forward with H.R. 2210, we must remember the invaluable services Head Start provided to millions of families. I look forward to continuing to work with the Committee with this and other legislation affecting the education of America's children. I would welcome the opportunity to work with you and your staff on legislative language to address these issues and discuss any other issue you might have from my perspective as a child psychologist. Again, I appreciate your tireless efforts on behalf of our children, all of who deserve the best education system in the world.

Thank you.

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