



February 11, 2009

The Hon. David Obey
Chairman, House Appropriations Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Obey:

We write concerning the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act to urge members of the conference committee to:

- Adopt the House funding for fiscal aid to states targeted at public education;
- Adopt the Senate's proposed 15% set-aside of Title I and IDEA education funds for pre-kindergarten and other pre-school programs; and
- Adopt the House funding for Head Start and Early Head Start.

Pre-K Now is a campaign of the Pew Center on the States. We work with state policy makers and advocates to advance policies to provide pre-k for all three and four year olds. When we talked with these state partners late last year about the most critical form federal recovery dollars could take, they were unanimous in pressing for fiscal relief to state governments. Restoring the \$79 billion "State Fiscal Stabilization Fund" would mean tens of thousands of public school teachers and other school staff members would keep their jobs -- and their paychecks. Direct funding to states provides immediate stimulus because the dollars go immediately to employees and other beneficiaries of public programs.

Investing in early education through the 15% set-asides in Title I and IDEA, as well as through Head Start and Early Head Start, is one of the best ways to stimulate the economy now -- and, unlike many other forms of spending, research shows that these investments reduce future costs to the taxpayers. In fact, few investments offer a guaranteed return. This is one of them.

While the decisions facing the conference committee are not easy, we are convinced that the wisest route to recovery involves evidence-based programs like quality early education which will benefit our economy in the short- and long-term. Please let us know if we can provide more information on these important investments by contacting either of us, or Kathy Patterson, senior officer for government relations, at kpatterson@pewtrusts.org. Thank you for your leadership in seeking to restore our nation's economic health.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Libby Doggett".

Libby Doggett, Deputy Director
Pew Center on the States

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Danielle Gonzales".

Danielle Gonzales, Project Manager
Pre-K Now