



April 16, 2007

Dear Senator:

We write on behalf of the children, parents, teachers, advocates, and state and local policy leaders who make up Pre-K Now to ask for your support for S. 556 to reauthorize Head Start. The bill reported by the Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions makes significant improvements in this landmark children's program. As you deliberate on this vital initiative for at-risk children, please:

- Require that 50 percent of Head Start teachers obtain a BA degree and certification in early childhood education in place of the bill's "goal" language;
- Retain the application of the 50 percent threshold at the state level, and oppose any effort to change this to a national basis;
- Retain the 1-year authorization of \$100 million for state early learning councils.

Research has shown that teachers with a BA degree and specialized education in early childhood are more effective than those with less formal education. Highly educated and fairly compensated pre-k teachers are more likely to develop strong, responsive, interpersonal relationships with their students, which affects each child's motivation to learn. We pledge our efforts through our state and local networks to build capacity for current Head Start staff to obtain a BA degree. We applaud the Committee for including early learning councils in the bill and look forward to working with our state and local partners to significantly strengthen early childhood education.

Please contact us if you have any questions about the Head Start reauthorization, and please let us know if we can share more information about the important work of promoting high-quality, voluntary pre-kindergarten for all three and four year olds.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely yours,

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

Libby Doggett  
Executive Director

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kathy Patterson".

Kathy Patterson  
Federal Policy Director