



November 24, 2010

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Steny Hoyer
Majority Leader
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Dave Obey
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jerry Lewis
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Boehner
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Eric Cantor
Minority Whip
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Todd Tiahrt
Ranking Member
Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor,
Health and Human Services, Education, and
Related Agencies
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Majority Leader Hoyer, Minority Leader Boehner, Minority Whip Cantor, Chairman Obey, Ranking Member Lewis, and Ranking Member Tiahrt:

As Congress works to finalize the Fiscal Year 2011 spending bills, we are writing to stress the importance of providing at least \$8.2 billion for Head Start/Early Head Start in the coming year. This is the level of funding provided to Head Start/Early Head Start in Fiscal 2010 and providing anything less than \$8.2 billion in Fiscal 2011 would have a devastating impact on children, families and communities served by Head Start/Early Head Start.

That funding has successfully expanded the capacity of Head Start/Early Head Start to provide more children from birth through age five with a range of educational, health, nutrition, and family support services to help put them on a pathway to success. New classrooms were built and renovated, buses were purchased, new jobs were created, staff received additional training and credentials, and Head Start/Early Head Start was able to serve 61,000 additional children. Their families can go to work. Their communities welcome the economic impact of this investment. We cannot afford to pull back on these investments now and hurt the children, families and communities.

For migrant and seasonal farm-worker families, access to Head Start/Early Head Start enhances public health and safety. In many cases, if there is not a slot available in an MSHS program or no MSHS program exists, parents are forced to take their child into the fields. By assuring that these expansion funds are quickly awarded, you are ensuring that the services provided by migrant and seasonal Head Start/Early Head Start programs are truly making a difference in the lives of children and families with no other options.

For American Indian and Alaska Native communities, which typically face unemployment rates 3 to 5 times higher than national averages even in good economic times, the Head Start and Early Head Start programs are the front line in Native efforts to promote community well-being and cultural vitality. A cut in these programs would have a devastating impact that could literally affect generations of Native youth.

We appreciate the budget pressures facing the country and facing you as lawmakers, but we cannot afford to pull back on the investments made in Head Start/Early Head Start. As the three national associations representing Head Start/Early Head Start, we strongly urge Congress to provide nothing less than \$8.2 billion in funding for Head Start/Early Head Start in Fiscal Year 2011.

Sincerely,



Yasmina Vinci
Executive Director
National Head Start Association



Danny Wells,
Immediate Past President
National Indian Head Start Directors Association



Victor Gomez
Interim Executive Director
National Migrant Seasonal Head Start Association

CC:

The Honorable George Miller, Chairman, US House Education and Labor Committee

The Honorable John Kline, Ranking Member, US House Education and Labor Committee

Roberto Rodriguez, Senior Education Advisor, White House Domestic Policy Council

David Hansell, Acting Assistant Secretary, Administration for Children and Families

Yvette Sanchez Fuentes, Director, Office of Head Start

Colleen Rathgeb, Director of Policy, Office of Head Start