



November 24, 2010

The Honorable Harry Reid  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Minority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Daniel Inouye  
Chairman  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Thad Cochran  
Vice-Chairman  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Harkin  
Chairman  
Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health  
and Human Services, Education, and Related  
Agencies  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader Reid, Minority Leader McConnell, Chairman Inouye, Vice-Chairman Cochran, and Chairman Harkin:

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 Mike Enzi, Ranking Member, US Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

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