

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515–2308

May 1, 2024

The Honorable Robert Aderholt
Chair
Appropriations Subcommittee on
Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education, and Related Agencies
2358-B Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
Appropriations Subcommittee on
Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education, and Related Agencies
1036 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Aderholt and Ranking Member DeLauro:

As you consider Fiscal Year 2025 (FY25) Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies appropriations legislation, and given the significant role Head Start¹ plays in supporting our country's most vulnerable children and families, we urge you to fund Head Start at the highest level the Subcommittee deems possible.

While there are disagreements on the best use of taxpayer dollars, investing in Head Start is a fiscally responsible course of action. A recent article in the *Journal of Political Economy* concluded that Head Start children – and their children, as well – have, on average, higher educational attainment, lower teen pregnancy, and less criminal engagement.² Another study concluded that every dollar invested in high-quality early childhood education programs yields a return of seven-to-nine dollars in long-term savings and societal benefits.³

In addition to providing children a high-quality early education, the Head Start model – one committed to 360-degree development of the whole child – provides a strong foundation which sets children up for a lifetime of learning and growth in school and in the wider world. Head Start is critical for bridging developmental gaps for children who may not have the same access to opportunities by providing access to comprehensive health and nutrition services, including medical and dental screenings, nutritious meals, and referrals to health care providers. During the 2022-2023 program year alone, Head Start staff conducted over 4.4 million home visits, helped over 560,000 children stay up-to-date on early and periodic diagnostic and treatment screenings, and provided preventative dental care to over 675,000 children.

For decades, Congress has united around Head Start to provide high-quality early learning and support for our nation's underserved children and their families. FY25 represents an opportunity to reinvigorate this vital federal-to-local partnership.

¹ Head Start includes all of the following: Head Start, Early Head Start, Migrant and Seasonal Head Start, American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start, and Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership programs.

² Barr, A., Gibbs, C. (2022). Breaking the Cycle? Intergenerational Effects of an Antipoverty Program in Early Childhood. *Journal of Political Economy*, 130 (12): 3253–3285.

³ Ludwig, J. and Phillips, D. (2007). The Benefits and Costs of Head Start. *Social Policy Report*. 21 (3: 4); Deming, D. (2009). Early childhood intervention and life-cycle skill development: Evidence from Head Start. *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*, 1(3): 111-134; Meier, J. (2003, June 20). Interim Report. Kindergarten Readiness Study: Head Start Success. Preschool Service Department, San Bernardino County, California; Deming, D. (2009, July). Early childhood intervention and life-cycle skill development: Evidence from Head Start, p. 112.

As you evaluate FY25 funding requests, we urge the Subcommittee to prioritize Head Start, a proven, crisis-tested program that unlocks the doors to opportunity for children and families across our great nation. This will allow Head Start to continue putting those children and their families on the path to success in school, in work, and in life, ultimately leading to greater prosperity for future generations

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



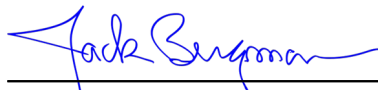
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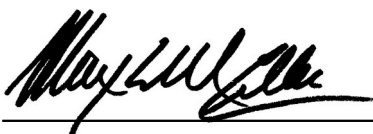
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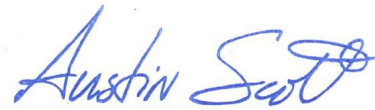
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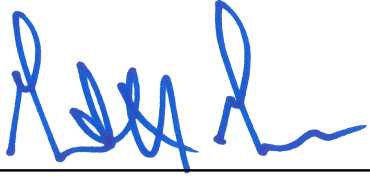
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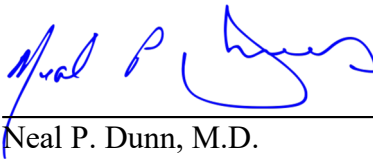
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