

*Jill Vollmer
Head Start
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From: Jill Vollmer [mailto:JillV@kootasca.org]
Sent: Wednesday, March 14, 2007 11:40 AM
To: Gayle
Subject: Re: FW: Last Call on Teacher Goal Language

My name is Jill Vollmer and I live in Northern Minnesota. I am 47 years old and Work at KOOTASCA Community Action Agency. When I was a Head Start teacher I wanted to get my BA but could not do it because I was not making enough money to go to school and support my family. The agency would pay for some classes but not the books (which were \$300.00 for one class in some cases), gas or meals away from home and then the child care expense for me while I worked and then went to school were too much with the wage I was receiving. Time is also a factor with classes an hour or more from my home by the time I got done with work went to class and got home it was 10:30 at night and I hadn't seen my family all day. Most classes are two or more nights a week so I could not take more than one class at a time. I don't think anyone realizes how long it takes to get a BA one class at a time. My family suffered while I was trying to get my education and was not at home. By the time I was almost done they changed the requirements for a BA and said it would take another year of collage to complete it. For me this amounted to at least two or three more years one class at a time and not seeing my family. My son is 22 now and I have my AA and feel so overwhelmed at more years in school I have temporarily suspended my education. I am working for Head Start as a supervisor but do miss the children and teaching. If I would have gotten my BA I would have left Head Start for a better paying job with the school system or other preschool because the pay is so low in Head Start.

Suggestions :

- Raise pay to match other programs Like ECFE in the public school.
 - Give enough funding to Pay Head Start employees enough to live on.
 - Make classes more accessible and available in the summer and on line.
 - Once you are started on a BA you have time to finish it before the regulations on what you need change. (Grand fathered in)
 - Use experience for collage credits. I taught for 18 years and worked with preschoolers for 26. With a Child development certificate then a CDA and finally a AA. I still have not receive my BA. I was a great teacher and loved what I did.
 - Give grants and scholarships to Head Start teachers like you do to Public school teachers. (We don't make enough to pay for it and then deduct if from taxes)
 - Allow for experience in the formula for Head start Teachers to be qualified to teach.
- Thank you for letting me tell you about my experience.

Jill Vollmer 47988 Lum Lake Trail Bovey MN. 55709

Thank You
Jill Vollmer
Family and Community Partnership's Coordinator
Kootasca Head Start
1213 SE 2nd Ave
Grand Rapids, Minnesota 55744
Phone: 218-327-5558 extension--2558
Fax: 218-327-6733
jillv@kootasca.org

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Head Start
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Head Start Association Letter

March 13, 2007

Dear Members of the House Education and Labor Committee:

We are writing to thank you for your hard work on Head Start Reauthorization legislation. We believe the bill is a good bill and will make significant improvements to Head Start. However, we do want to express our opposition to a provision in the bill that would require at least 50 percent of all Head Start teachers in center-based programs to have at least a baccalaureate degree by September 30, 2013. Instead, we support the Souder amendment that would make this requirement a national goal.

We support the Souder amendment for five reasons:

- 1) While the bill authorizes some funding for teacher degrees through the quality set-aside, the bill does not authorize sufficient funds to help 50 percent of Head Start teachers to earn a baccalaureate degree. The Center for Law and Social Policy estimates that it would cost an additional \$2.1 billion over five years (2008-2012) for 50 percent of Head Start teachers to have a baccalaureate degree. Head Start programs are already strapped financially because Head Start and Early Head Start programs experienced an 8 percent real decline (inflation-adjusted) in federal funding between fiscal year 2002 and 2007. This has made it more difficult for programs to retain and attract BA teachers.
- 2) Requiring Head Start teachers to earn baccalaureate degrees may drive away good veteran teachers who are very competent in early childhood education and are very familiar with the community and culture of the children and families that they serve, but do not have a baccalaureate degree.
- 3) Research suggests that well-trained and competent teachers can produce better child outcomes than teachers with simply a baccalaureate degree.
- 4) The bill sets a nationwide requirement for programs, but it is unclear whether programs could be penalized for not meeting these requirements or how the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services would regulate the teacher provisions in the bill. The Souder amendment would simply remove the cloud over Head Start programs and make it clear that no program would be penalized for not being able to retain and attract teachers with baccalaureate degrees.
- 5) The bill does nothing to remove barriers to higher education for teachers. Many programs are in rural or remote areas where institutions of higher education are not readily available. These teachers have access to online courses, but these courses are often more expensive than attending a college in person and some courses require students to be in the classroom. Many colleges and universities also do not accept credits from two-year programs. This makes it more difficult for Head Start teachers to complete their coursework towards a baccalaureate year degree. The Souder amendment would relieve programs of the pressure of meeting the teaching requirements, while still making it an important goal.

Thanks again for all your work on behalf of children and families! We encourage you to support the Souder amendment when it comes up for a vote in the Education and Labor committee.

Sincerely,

Sarah M. Greene

Sarah M. Greene
President and CEO
National Head Start Association

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

March 9, 2007

The Honorable George Miller
Chairman, House Committee on Education and Labor
2181 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Howard "Buck" McKeon
Ranking Member, House Committee on Education and Labor
2101 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Miller and Ranking Member McKeon:

For more than forty years, one of the most unique and important aspects of the Head Start program has been its emphasis on parental involvement. Head Start has enabled parents, as representatives on Head Start policy councils, to participate in making important decisions regarding budget, programming, and personnel. As the Committee plans to mark up its Head Start reauthorization bill this coming week, we believe that preserving this structure of governance is fundamental to the continued success of the program.

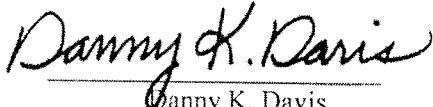
Under current law, Head Start boards of directors and policy councils share the responsibility of managing a Head Start program. This partnership helps to ensure that there is a system of checks and balances in place and that the important voices of experts in accounting, finance, and early education are balanced with the equally important voices of parents who have children in the program. Many of our constituents who are involved with Head Start have told us that policy council members, especially parents, often have a much greater day-to-day knowledge of the program than the board of directors and are thus better able to provide accountability. Indeed, a 2005 GAO report found that calls from parents are often the first signal to Head Start regional offices that a program is struggling with mismanagement.

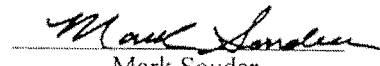
As the Education and Labor Committee prepares for its markup, we want to ensure that it does not diminish the role of parent policy councils. We believe this would undermine the future success of the Head Start program and, in turn, the success of thousands of at-risk children and their parents. Like both of you, we believe there should be stronger accountability within Head Start programs. The 2005 GAO report, for example, cited a lack of oversight from the HHS regional offices and Head Start boards of directors as sizable obstacles to improved accountability. However, these reforms need not come at the expense of parental involvement in the program. Any Head Start reauthorization bill must preserve the current oversight role of the


policy councils with regard to board actions in key areas such as budget, programming, and personnel, if they are to maintain their current vital role within the program.


Again, we ask that the chairman's mark of the Head Start reauthorization bill retain the current shared governance structure of the policy councils and board of directors. The current structure has helped to successfully prepare hundreds of thousands of low-income children to enter kindergarten and empowered thousands of parents to take greater roles in the lives of their children and communities. Thank you for your attention to this matter. If you have any questions, please contact Jill Hunter-Williams with Rep. Davis at 225-5006 or Brett Swearingen with Rep. Souder at 225-4436.

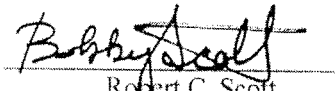
Sincerely,



Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress



Mark Souder
Member of Congress



Donald M. Payne
Member of Congress

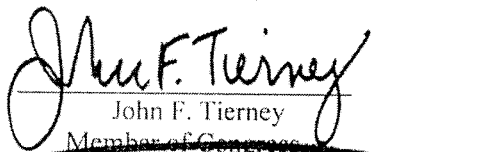

Ric Keller
Member of Congress



Robert C. Scott
Member of Congress

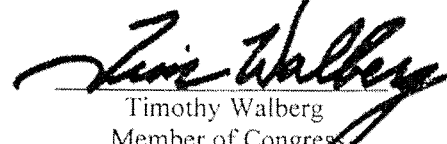

Todd Russell Platts
Member of Congress

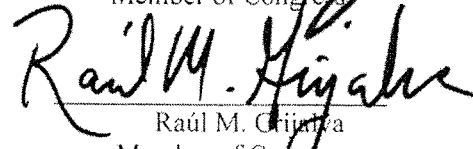

Linda T. Sanchez
Member of Congress

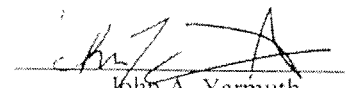

Rob Bishop
Member of Congress

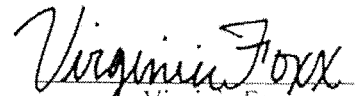

John F. Tierney
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