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

The Honorable Jim Nussle
Chairman
House Budget Committee
309 Cannon HOB
Washington, D.C. 20515-6024

March 7, 2006

The Honorable John Spratt
Ranking Member
House Budget Committee
B-71 Canon HOB
Washington, D.C. 20515-6024

Dear Chairman Nussle and Ranking Member Spratt:

As you prepare your Fiscal Year 2007 House Budget Resolution, we urge you to include $7.3 billion for Head Start programs.

Head Start programs currently assist over 900,000 children and their families nationwide. If the President's FY07 budget proposal for flat funding Head Start programs is adopted, these programs will have sustained a real decrease of 11% since 2002. Programs are already facing incredible budget constraints that are forcing them to either cut children from their programs or cut services such as program hours, transportation and even teachers. Based on the Congressional Budget Office's estimated increase in the consumer price index, **flat funding the Head Start programs in FY 2007 would result in reducing the number of children served by at least 19,000 in FY 2007**.

Head Start programs provide comprehensive education to children and their families to combat poverty and improve the richness of the early learning experience. Head Start children are better prepared to learn and have higher self-esteem and social behavior at school entry. They also score higher on school readiness measures such as verbal achievement, perceptual reasoning, and social competence than children who have attended no preschool. Moreover, Head Start children have significantly lower absentee rates and are less likely to be retained in grade during elementary school than non-Head Start children.

Not only does Head Start provide valuable early education programs, but it also provides health and dental services to children and families who might not otherwise receive them. Studies show that parents who receive these services have decrease feeling of anxiety, depression and illness while their children are 8% more likely to be immunized than children who did not participate in Head Start or preschool programs.

Head Start programs have consistently received praise from parents throughout the country. A 2001 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services report shows that 96% of parents were satisfied with how Head Start prepares their child for kindergarten. In addition studies have shown that the economic benefits of Head Start far exceed their costs, with one study showing that for every $1 spent by taxpayers, they received $9 in future benefits.

Head Start is an investment in our future that merits adequate funding to continue to provide much needed education and health services to America's children.

Sincerely,

Loretta Sanchez
Member of Congress

Rob Simmons
Member of Congress

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Member of Congress

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