



## Federal Update – May 14, 2007

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Questions?  
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### Overview

The past month witnessed a surge of federal legislative activity on pre-k and early childhood education. As the *Head Start* reauthorization goes before the Senate, Sens. Boxer and Casey have introduced bills to improve and expand pre-k. In addition, the Congressional budget resolution was adopted this week, including \$9 billion more for education than had been proposed by President Bush. The nonbinding resolution will determine the amount of discretionary funding available to legislators for federal programs, including education initiatives. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi has scheduled a summit on early childhood education for Tuesday, May 22, which will bring legislators together to learn about early education from experts in the field. Here's an in-depth look at these new developments.

### Speaker's Summit on Early Childhood Education

On Tuesday, May 22, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi will hold the National Summit on America's Children. According to the Speaker's office, the summit "will convene national experts and academics on recent scientific findings and how they relate to early childhood development" and serve as "a first step in making certain that federal policies on children reflect the latest scientific developments." Co-chairs of the summit are House Education and Labor Committee Chairman George Miller (CA) and Reps. Rosa DeLauro (CT) and Chaka Fattah (PA). The summit will be webcast, and panelists will be answering questions from the web audience. To obtain a copy of the day's agenda and webcast links, please visit the [Speaker's website](#).

### **Head Start Reauthorization (H.R. 1429)**

H.R. 1429, the Head Start Improvement Act of 2007, passed the House on March 5 by an overwhelming vote of 365-48 ([Roll no. 285](#)). It is now under consideration by the Senate and final floor action is expected shortly. Differences between the Senate and House versions follow.

- The House version of the bill asks for 50 percent of *Head Start* teachers, **nationwide**, to hold a bachelor's degree and certification, while the Senate version sets a target for **each state** to have half its *Head Start* teachers hold bachelor's degree and certification. Pre-K Now prefers the Senate version over the House version in this respect, as it addresses regional disparities between teacher qualifications.
- The House version of the bill, while applying the overall level of teacher training nationally rather than on a state-by-state basis, makes this level of training a **requirement**; the Senate version sets this level of training as a **goal**. In this area, the House version is stronger.
- The Senate version funds state early learning councils at \$100 million in one-time funds; the House at \$5 million per year.

The issues will be resolved in a House-Senate conference.

### **Congressional Budget Resolution**

Congress approved a budget resolution for fiscal years 2008-2012 this week, authorizing an additional \$92 billion in discretionary spending for Education, Training, Employment, and Social Services. This broadly defined category sets the limits on how much Congress may spend on expanding existing education programs or creating new initiatives. Included in this sum are an additional \$9.5 billion above the President's FY08 budget request in funding that can include IDEA, SCHIP, NCLB, and Pell grants.

### **Pre-K Legislation**

S. 152, A Bill to Amend the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 2007, introduced earlier this year by Sen. Barbara Boxer (D-CA), authorizes the Secretary of Education to award matching grants to at least 10 states. These grants will be used to establish early education programs providing children with at least a half-day of schooling each weekday during the school year preceding kindergarten.

Last week, Sen. Robert Casey (D-PA) introduced S. 1374, the Prepare All Kids Act of 2007. The bill designates \$35 billion for FY2008 through FY2012 to provide grants to states that are developing or expanding pre-k programs. Funds are made available to provide pre-k to children of families living below 200 percent of the federal poverty line. The bill includes:

- a requirement that pre-k teachers have a bachelor's degree or enroll in a bachelor's degree-granting program;

- class sizes that are limited to 20 students with 10:1 child-adult ratios;
- curricula based on scientific research;
- family involvement in pre-k programs;
- additional funding for disabled children and English language learners; and
- a requirement that 25 percent of grantee providers be community-based organizations.

## **Other Bills Introduced**

### **Teacher Excellence for All Children Act of 2007 [S. 1339; H.R. 2204]**

Rep. George Miller (D-CA) and Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-MA) introduced House and Senate versions of the Teacher Excellence for All Children Act of 2007 (TEACH). The legislation establishes a program for administering federal grants in the amount of \$4,000 to be received by undergraduate and graduate students who, after completion of their studies, agree to teach for at least four years in high-need areas such as mathematics, science, and foreign languages. The awardees will receive the funding through the educational institution administering their program of study and must demonstrate their subsequent employment as teachers in the approved subject areas at high-need public elementary or secondary schools. The total level of funding designated for administering programs in this bill is \$3,350,000,000, with restrictions as to the amount allotted to each program.

### **Education Begins at Home Act of 2007 [S. 667]**

This bill, introduced by Sen. Kit Bond (R-MO), authorizes federal grants to states seeking to create or expand early childhood home visitation programs. Four hundred million dollars in federal funding would be provided through the states to local education agencies and other eligible organizations. The bill includes special provisions for families with English language learners and directs the Department of Defense to make competitive grants for early home visitation for military families.

The bill also addresses *Early Head Start* by directing the Secretary of Health and Human Services to establish training and performance standards for home visitor staff in *Early Head Start* programs.

### **States Using Collaboration and Coordination to Enhance Standards for Students (SUCCESS) Act [S. 164]**

This legislation, introduced by Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-MA), requires the Secretary of Education to report on the degree of progress the states have made in reaching federal benchmarks for student achievement and authorizes federal grants to help states establish student preparedness councils. The councils are designed to include representatives of the state's governor as well as local education officials. The councils are charged with broad responsibilities to monitor the progress of children in pre-k through twelfth grade and to create strategies to ensure the quality of their educational experience.

## Missed Opportunities for Pre-K

Not every bill that could contain a provision for pre-kindergarten does so. H.R. 209 was introduced by Rep. Jose Serrano (D-NY) “to authorize the appropriation of funds to be used to recruit, hire, and train 100,000 new classroom paraprofessionals in order to improve educational achievement for children.” The legislation would provide federal funds to train assistant teachers in K-12 classrooms and targets the majority of funding to high-need school districts. As written, the bill does not apply to pre-kindergarten teaching assistants and represents an example of legislation that could be expanded to recognize the importance of including pre-k in a wide range of federal education laws.

## Committee Report on Military Families

The Joint Economic Committee of the House and Senate released its report on the impact of military deployment on the families of armed service members. Among the paper’s findings, it was determined that 11 percent of women and 4 percent of men on active duty are single parents. Unfortunately, the authors found that in spite of recent improvements to the military child care system, services are not keeping pace with rising demand as service members are repeatedly called for deployment. A full version of the report is now available via the [JEC website](#).

## State Breakouts:

### Featuring actions on early education by individual members of Congress

#### California

- Rep. George Miller (CA-7) will deliver opening remarks at Speaker Pelosi’s National Summit on American’s Children on Tuesday. The remarks are scheduled to be delivered at 9:00 am and will be broadcast live from the [Speaker’s webpage](#).

#### Connecticut

- Rep. Rosa DeLauro (CT-3) will deliver opening remarks at Speaker Pelosi’s National Summit on America’s Children on Tuesday. The remarks are scheduled to be delivered at 9:00 am and will be broadcast live from the [Speaker’s webpage](#).

#### Texas

- An amendment offered by Rep. Eddie Bernice Johnson (TX-30) to create partnerships between *Head Start* and historically black colleges and universities passed as part of the *Head Start* reauthorization.
- An amendment offered by Rep. Henry Cuellar (TX-28) to require *Head Start* programs to describe how they measure the progress made by students with Limited English Proficiency passed as part of the *Head Start* reauthorization.

**Hawaii**

- An amendment offered by Rep. Mazie Hirono (HI-2) to ensure that training and technical assistance to *Head Start* programs are provided by entities with specific expertise in infant and toddler development passed as part of the *Head Start* reauthorization.

**Pennsylvania**

- An amendment offered by Rep. Joe Sestak (PA-7) to forgive student loans for *Head Start* and *Early Head Start* teachers who have earned a bachelor's degree in a field related to early education and who commit to teach in the program for at least three years passed as part of the *Head Start* Reauthorization.
- Rep. Chaka Fattah (PA-2) will deliver opening remarks at Speaker Pelosi's National Summit on American's Children on Tuesday. The remarks are scheduled to be delivered at 9:00 am and will be broadcast live from the [Speaker's webpage](#).

**Rhode Island**

- An amendment offered by Rep. Patrick Kennedy (RI-1) to define "inclusive classrooms" as *Head Start* classrooms that include both children with and without disabilities passed as part of the *Head Start* reauthorization.

**Missouri**

- An amendment offered by Rep. Russ Carnahan (MO-3) to allow *Head Start* organizations to decrease their enrollment if funds are not adequate to maintain the existing level of enrollment passed as part of the *Head Start* reauthorization.

**Nevada**

- An amendment offered by Rep. John C. Porter (NV-3) to require background checks for *Head Start* grantees passed as part of the *Head Start* reauthorization.

**North Carolina**

- An amendment offered by Rep. Heath Shuler (NC-11) to outline the history and importance of allowing faith-based and community-based organizations to participate in *Head Start* programs passed as part of the *Head Start* reauthorization.

**Ohio**

- An amendment offered by Rep. Zachary Space (OH-18) to include consideration of barriers to program administration and improvement in rural *Head Start* programs when funding those programs passed as part of the *Head Start* reauthorization.