

November 14, 2007



The Hon. George Miller
Chairman
Committee on Education and Labor
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Hon. Howard McKeon
Ranking Member
Committee on Education and Labor
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Miller and Representative McKeon:

We write as advocates for high-quality pre-kindergarten education to thank the Committee for authorizing programs to support pre-k teachers through the Higher Education Act. These timely revisions to the law will enable more students to obtain the necessary training and credentials to provide a high-quality education based on proven pedagogical methods and best practices in early childhood development.

In particular, we would like to recognize the Committee's efforts to enable pre-k teachers to participate in professional development activities in partnership with higher education institutions through Title II. We also applaud the inclusion of the early childhood educator professional development task forces, the forgiveness of Perkins loans for pre-k teachers who work in high-poverty areas, and the definition of a "highly competent" early childhood educator, which sets an appropriate national standard for proficiency among teachers of our youngest students.

The Committee made a clear commitment to ensuring that pre-k teachers are able to pay for their degrees by enabling them to obtain up to \$10,000 in relief of loans under the Federal Family Education Loan Program. This important provision gives necessary support to aspiring pre-k teachers, whose low average salaries make the prospect of financing their student loan debt all but impossible. As states across the country increase enrollment in their pre-k programs and adopt bachelor's degree requirements, the Committee's provision of \$10,000 in loan relief will help to meet the rising demand for high-quality pre-k teachers nationwide.

Thank you for securing these important changes on behalf of pre-k teachers. We look forward to working with you and your staffs as the Higher Education Act moves toward conference with the Senate. Please do not hesitate to contact either of us or federal policy fellow Matthew Smith (msmith@preknow.org) if we can be of help in supporting these outstanding policies.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Libby Doggett".

Libby Doggett, Ph.D.
Executive Director

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kathy Patterson".

Kathy Patterson
Federal Policy Director

cc: Members, Committee on Education and Labor, US House of Representatives