

June 24, 2008

The Honorable George Miller  
Chairman  
House Committee on Education and Labor  
2181 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington D.C. 20515

The Honorable Howard P. McKeon  
Ranking Member  
House Committee on Education and Labor  
2101 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington D.C. 20515

Re: ***Providing Resources Early for Kids Act "Pre-K Act," H.R. 3289***

Dear Chairman Miller and Ranking Member McKeon:

As organizations representing stakeholders from the education, child care, and social policy communities who care deeply about investing in our nation's children, we would like to express our strong support for the *Providing Resources Early for Kids Act "Pre-K Act"* (H.R. 3289) and urge a strong "yes" vote on the bill on June 25th.

As you know, the cognitive, social, and emotional skills that children develop during their early years are essential building blocks for their entire lives. Pre-kindergarten programs play a critical role in helping to develop these skills and to set a positive trajectory for student success.

Research shows that children who participate in high-quality preschool programs demonstrate higher achievement levels in the elementary grades, show greater interest in learning, and are less likely to repeat a grade or require special education classes. In addition, children who attended high-quality pre-k preschool programs are less likely to be involved in the criminal justice system and/or become teen parents.

Yet, despite the importance of early childhood education on child outcomes, many families do not have access to public preschool programs and are limited in terms of the quality of program they can afford.

While states have substantially increased their investments in quality pre-k in recent years, allocating \$528 million in new state dollars in FY 2008 alone, these programs currently serve just 3% of the nation's three-year-olds; and 22% of four-year-olds.

The *Pre-K Act* would make a needed *federal* investment and expand the reach of quality pre-k to benefit children and their families by authorizing grants to states to "enhance or improve" state-funded pre-kindergarten programs through better teacher training, smaller class sizes, extended hours and other investments. This bill would establish a federal-state partnership to encourage states to meet high standards in early education. A bipartisan national voter survey released June 17<sup>1</sup> found that nearly 7 in 10 American voters favor a new federal investment in state pre-k programs.

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<sup>1</sup> Peter D. Hart Research Associates, Inc. and American Viewpoint survey of 800 registered voters, and an additional 200 "swing voters," released by Pre-K Now.

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We urge you to support this bill and are hopeful that, given your leadership, the committee will approve legislation to strengthen pre-k opportunities for our children and make a critical difference in our communities and our nation.

Sincerely,

American Association of University Women  
American Counseling Association  
Council of Administrators of Special Education  
First Focus  
Learning Disabilities Association of America  
National Association of School Psychologists  
National Association of State Boards of Education  
National Association of State Directors of Special Education  
National Education Association  
National Parent Teacher Association  
National School Boards Association  
Pre-K Now  
School Social Work Association of America

Cc: Members, House Committee on Education and Labor