

House Approves Sweeping Improvements to Head Start Program

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, the House of Representatives passed bipartisan legislation to improve and expand access to Head Start, the early childhood education program that has served more than 20 million children and families in its 40 year history. In Fiscal Year 2006, more than 7,000 children in Connecticut benefited from Head Start.

"Head Start is one of the great success stories of our education system. The program has put millions of young kids on the road to success at an early age. I am thrilled that today, we improved this proven program so that thousands more Connecticut kids will have what they deserve – a helping hand in their early education years," said Murphy.

The bill, H.R. 1429, the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act, increases funding to \$7.35 billion for Fiscal Year 2008, and allows for increases each year thereafter. The legislation will provide more opportunities for teachers to expand their knowledge base, improve classroom quality, strengthen Head Start's focus on school readiness, expand access to Head Start for more children, ensure that Head Start centers are well-run and effective and boost coordination between Head Start and other school readiness programs.

Additionally, the legislation phases out the ineffective National Reporting System, a test that is currently given to all 4 and 5-year-olds in the Head Start program.

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