



June 23, 2008

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

Dear Mr. McKeon:

It is with great pleasure that we share with you the results of a bipartisan, national survey of American voters, nearly 7 in 10 of whom favor action on a new federal grant to support high-quality state pre-kindergarten programs. The House Education and Labor Committee has the opportunity on June 25 to move forward on an issue that reflects nearly 40 years of research and has, now, earned the support of a clear majority of American voters. We urge you to vote in support of H.R. 3289, the Providing Resources Early for Kids (PRE-K) Act of 2007.

Very few government investments have the proven record of return on investment demonstrated by high-quality voluntary pre-kindergarten. We know you are familiar with the research: returns ranging as high as \$16 for each \$1 invested in pre-k, and a record of reduced expenditures for special education and other social programs. These benefits for taxpayers, communities, and the nation as a whole are in addition to the value pre-k has been shown to have for children: success in elementary school, a better rate of high school graduation, and higher lifetime earnings.

H.R. 3289 would authorize grants to states to “enhance or improve” state-funded pre-k programs, providing for the first time a federal role in improving the quality of the programs states offer our youngest learners. In our recent national survey, a majority of voters – and a majority of swing voters -- shared the view that the federal government is not doing enough to invest in early education. When told the per-taxpayer cost of a new federal pre-k grant, 62% of voters continued to voice their support for the legislative proposal.

Today states are continuing to invest in pre-k – with another 5.5% increase in state investments proposed by governors of both major political parties this year in spite of difficult financial times for most states. State investments will continue to grow, yet state programs reach only 22% of four-year-olds. With the new federal incentives to improve programs proposed in H.R. 3289, states could improve teacher quality, reduce class sizes, and make other improvements that will benefit children and taxpayers alike. To ensure that the states are upholding their commitment, the PRE-K Act requires that state per-child expenditures on early education programs are maintained or increased each fiscal year.

The PRE-K Act is a win for everyone: for the Committee which has the opportunity to show its bipartisan support for initiatives taken by the states; a win for taxpayers who will see a strong return on their investment, and a win for the children who will have greater success in school and in life by virtue of a new federal-state partnership in pre-k.

Please follow the lead of Republican and Democratic governors, and a clear majority of American voters, by supporting H.R. 3289 on June 25.

Thank you for your leadership and for your service to our nation.

Sincerely yours,



Libby Doggett, Ph.D.  
Executive Director



Kathy Patterson  
Federal Policy Director

cc: Members, Committee on Education and Labor