

December 3, 2009

Dear Appropriations Committee,

I would like to express my interest in the budget for Early Care and Education. I am pleased that you will keep my thoughts in mind when the budget resolution is, once again, given consideration.

Although certain priorities, no matter how worthy, may have to be deferred, it is imperative that the *worthiness* of quality care and education for young children is given serious consideration. Without quality care for our young children, we create immeasurable obstacles for our nation's employees. The demand for available quality care and education for our youth is a growing need that early care professionals struggle to keep up with. Today's parents require early care and education so that they can join the work force and pursue professional development. This in turn, saves the state from funding services for the unemployed such as; energy assistance, WIC, and HUSKY (just to name a few). How can we cut back on early care and education when its employees already make minimum wages and need state assistance?

Our most valuable resources, as we keep our eye on the future, are our children! If we fail as a nation to protect them, we will be subservient to the intelligence and well-being of nations valuing the *worth* of their children. Early education programs funded by the state are blessed by state mandates. They are doing many early intervention procedures that save money in the long term. Keeping these children in quality care diffuses the frustration in parents that can germinate domestic abuse. It keeps parents employed and proud to earn a living. State funded early care employees also catch developmental delays when there is still an opportunity to correct what could evolve into a life-long (expensive) disabilities for children. In addition, we offer parents FREE parenting workshops on Positive Behavior Supports which protect children from abuse and neglect and ultimately from ending up in the **criminal/justice system**. The expense of educating a child is insignificant compared to the expense of sustaining an inmate! Lack of education and caring is directly linked to the majority of individuals incarcerated. STOP SEEKING IMMEDIATE GRATIFICATION AT THE EXPENSE OF OUR FUTURE BUDGET CRISIS.

*Early care and education employees work for such small wages that they, themselves qualify and utilize state services in a struggle to provide for their families.* It is education and money and a quality up-bringing that put you in position to be able to make a difference. We know that early intervention and support services provide an even better opportunity for future success. When you are retired, who will be representing your needs? Who will be taking care of you? America's children will! This is certain, whether you choose to educate and care for *them* or not. May you receive in this life what you give to it. On behalf of the children who are the future of our great nation, I pray for your full-fledged support on this issue.

Sincerely,  
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