

February 23, 2016

Restore Funding for Even Start

Dear Appropriations Committee:

I am writing to ask for your support to restore funding for Even Start. I am a constituent, a registered voter and have worked at Middletown Adult Education for the past 16 years. Every year funding for Even Start gets reduced. This year they are proposing eliminating all Even Start funding . **YOU CANNOT LET THIS HAPPEN.** As you know, the Even Start program provides early childhood education and adult academic instruction. This program allows parents with young children to complete their high school requirements with childcare services available on site. Even Start is a unique two generational model that focuses on the literacy level of both parents and children, which helps to break the cycle of intergenerational low literacy.

In the past, student researchers at Wesleyan University conducted an evaluation of the Even Start program in Middletown. The conclusions found that Even Start has a significant and positive long-term effect on parental involvement in their children's education. Participants of Even Start are more likely to:

- read more frequently with their children
- have higher aspirations for their children's future
- act as stronger advocates for their children's education

Eliminating Even Start would remove opportunities for a group of people that are served only by Even Start. If funding is eliminated, families who are the poorest and most in need of literacy services are the ones who will suffer. This would have a profoundly negative impact on the families that we work with. We urge you in the strongest possible terms to oppose these cuts, which we believe would have a devastating effect on our education efforts.

The families of Connecticut need your help and we urge you to restore funds for Even Start. I cannot emphasize enough the importance of Even Start and Adult Education. The Middletown program has served over 500 families in Middlesex County since 2001. We provide a second chance for students. Students that attend Middletown Adult Education have returned to high school for a second time to be successful. They flourish in our small classes where teachers have the opportunity to really help them succeed. By acquiring much needed skills, it allows them to become successful and achieve their goals. Every citizen deserves to be a contributing member of society. Please do not deny residents of Connecticut the best opportunity for their second chance at success.

Thank you for your continued support.

Sincerely,

Susan R. Ladny