

Congressman Reads to Head Start Students, Talks with Teachers and Parents About Importance of Investing in this Program

FORT WASHINGTON, MD – Today, Congressman Steny H. Hoyer (MD-5) met with students, parents, teachers and administrators at Fort Foote Elementary School to discuss the importance of early education and how Head Start provides important educational, nutritional and health services to young children. Head Start is the nation's primary early childhood development program for low-income youth, and under the Republican budget for the remainder of this fiscal year, more than 2,300 Maryland children will lose access to this critical program.

“There is no greater investment we can make than in our children and their future,” **stated Congressman Steny Hoyer.**

“Unfortunately, proposed cuts to early education in the Republican budget will impede our nation's efforts to provide all American children with the opportunity to learn, grow, and thrive. We must continue to build on this idea by investing in Head Start, a proven program to help more children nationwide reach their full potential. Democrats agree that spending cuts are necessary to tackle our deep budget deficit, but those cuts must be smart and targeted. I look forward to working with Republicans on a solution to our budget crisis that does not include cuts to important programs that help provide a more promising future for our children.”

Head Start has been the premiere early childhood education program for low-income children for more than 40 years. Head Start has served more than 27 million children and families in that time, and it remains a cornerstone in this country's efforts to close the achievement gap and combat poverty. There are currently close to 12,000 Maryland children who are enrolled in the Head Start Program.

Head Start Funding and Children Served

- Head Start is currently operating under a Continuing Resolution at the FY 2010 level of \$7.2 billion.
- The GOP Spending Bill would have funded Head Start at \$6.2 billion for the rest of FY 2011, removing nearly 200,000 children from Head Start and Early Head Start programs, and terminating at least 30,000 personnel positions as well.
- The FY 2012 request is \$8.1 billion and would serve nearly 968,000 children (more than current levels of 853,000 in Head Start and 114,000 in Early Head Start).

- Head Start is only currently serving 40 percent of the eligible population in Head Start, and 4 percent of the eligible population in Early Head Start.

Prince George's County Head Start Facts

- In Prince George's County, 932 children participate in Head Start programs, at 37 Head Start sites in 54 classrooms. Each classroom is supported by a teacher and a paraprofessional staff member.
- Family and community support services include family advocacy, health and mental health, disabilities assessment and therapy, emergency and crisis intervention, housing assistance, transportation assistance, English as Second Language (ESL) training, GED and adult education training, substance abuse prevention training, child abuse and neglect services, domestic violence services, and child support assistance services.
- If the Republican Spending Bill were enacted (15% reduction), the County would be forced to reduce enrollment by 140 students and lay off at least 20 Head Start personnel.