

NHSA: Congress Cuts 24,000 Head Start Child Slots in Order to Underwrite Tax Cuts for Wealthy

WASHINGTON, Dec. 22 /PRNewswire/ -- National Head Start Association (NHSA) President and CEO Sarah Greene issued the following statement today:

"We are appalled to see that Congress has chosen to sacrifice what is likely to be the equivalent of 24,000 Head Start classroom slots for America's poorest children in order to pay for tax cuts for this nation's wealthiest individuals.

The combination of the 1 percent cut for all programs under the Defense appropriations bill and the flat funding for Head Start for FY 2006 in the Labor-HHS Appropriations conference report represents an unprecedented decision by Congress to move away from its long-term commitment to giving the most at-risk children in the United States the opportunity through Head Start to set out on the path to academic and lifetime success.

We don't see the logic in leaving these children out in the cold this holiday season so that the wealthy can continue to receive additional tax cuts. This is the equivalent of Congress putting a lump of coal in the stockings of America's neediest children! Making matters even worse, Congress is cutting nearly \$5 billion in Medicaid services for low-income children and families. With Medicaid services already dwindling at the state level, America's lower-income parents will either pay more or be forced to forego essential health services, including medications, dental care and eyeglasses.

The one positive piece of news in all of this is that \$90 million was provided to Head Start programs in the Gulf Coast region to rebuild and to serve evacuees. While this is a step in the right direction, it makes no sense to tear down Head Start in most of the country at the same time that you are rebuilding it in just one portion of the nation."

ABOUT NHSA

The National Head Start Association (<http://www.nhsa.org/>) is a private not-for-profit membership organization dedicated exclusively to meeting the needs of Head Start children and their families. It represents more than 900,000 children, 200,000 staff and 2,700 Head Start programs in the United States. You can read about Head Start success stories on the Web at <http://www.igotaheadstart.org/>.

Source: National Head Start Association, Alexandria, VA

CONTACT: Ailis Aaron, +1-703-276-3265, or aaaron@hastingsgroup.com, for National Head Start Association

Web site: <http://www.nhsa.org/>
<http://www.igotaheadstart.org/>

— National Head Start Association
PR Newswire
2005-12-22