

September 22, 2005- Head Start Statement

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Watch Loretta's Head Start statement...

Keep Head Start Strong

I rise today in strong support of the Head Start Program and the great opportunities it provides to children, parents, and families in America. I am a Head Start kid. I experienced firsthand the valuable, comprehensive education program that Head Start provides for low-income families.

Head Start opened up a new world not only for me, but also for my family. As I received education and health services, my mother learned valuable lessons on how to become a more active and involved parent in America's public school system.

I am glad to see that HR 2123 preserves the valuable Federal-to-local design that gives parents and local communities the right and responsibility to be active in their Head Start programs.

To maintain the integrity of Head Start, I would urge my colleagues to pay special attention to two votes:

My colleague from Indiana, Mr. Souder, will be offering an amendment to restore the joint governance structure of Head Start and allow policy councils, made up of parents and community members, to approve or disapprove program plans and operation activities along with the board of directors. I urge my colleagues to support this important amendment.

On the other hand, I urge that the House to oppose the amendment that would allow faith-based Head Start programs to use federal taxpayer dollars to discriminate against teachers and employees solely on the basis of religion.

We need to keep Head Start strong and open to everyone, so it can remain the great program that it was for me, and continues to be for so many Americans.