

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 21, 2026

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito  
Chair  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and  
Human Services, Education,  
and Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and  
Human Services, Education,  
and Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chair Capito and Ranking Member Baldwin:

As you consider the Fiscal Year (FY) 2027 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill, we respectfully urge you to prioritize robust funding for Head Start. For over 60 years, Head Start has provided critical education, health, and nutrition services to the nation's most vulnerable children, as well as employment and educational support to families. Robust funding for the program would allow Head Start to build on its long-demonstrated success and unlock doors to greater opportunities for children and families across the nation.

Head Start is one of the most vital federal programs dedicated to improving the education, health, and nutritional well-being of low-income children. First established in 1965 to combat the cycle of poverty,<sup>1</sup> Head Start has expanded over the past six decades to provide early childhood education and wraparound services for more than 40 million children (from birth to age five) and families, especially in rural communities with child care deserts.<sup>2</sup> For example, in Fiscal Year 2025, Head Start facilitated 3,522,592 home visits, helped 566,954 children stay up to date on early and periodic health screenings, and provided preventative dental care to over 673,861 children.<sup>3</sup> This nationwide program has been found to improve health outcomes, increase high school graduation rates, and reduce the likelihood of adult poverty.<sup>4</sup>

However, Head Start funding falls below what is needed for the program. Over the past few years, Head Start providers have struggled to secure sufficient financial investments to improve their physical infrastructure, which directly affects the safety and health of the children.<sup>5</sup> Providers have also faced challenges in recruiting and retaining quality early childhood educators due to lower wages and benefits compared to their counterparts. For example, early education teachers at Head Start earn \$25,000 less than their counterparts teaching kindergarten in public

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<sup>1</sup> *Head Start History*, HeadStart.gov (January 31, 2025), <https://headstart.gov/about-us/article/head-start-history>.

<sup>2</sup> *Head Start Advantage: Investments That Work*, National Head Start Association, <https://nhsa.org/resource/head-start-advantage-investments-that-work/>.

<sup>3</sup> *2026 Head Start Profile*, National Head Start Association, [https://nhsa.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/2026\\_StateFactSheet\\_National.pdf](https://nhsa.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/2026_StateFactSheet_National.pdf).

<sup>4</sup> National Head Start Association, *supra* note 2.

<sup>5</sup> *Addressing Head Start Facilities and Infrastructure Needs*, National Head Start Association, <https://nhsa.org/resource/addressing-head-start-facilities-and-infrastructure-needs/>.

schools. This has led the program to experience an unprecedented number of staff vacancies and office closures. As a result, robust funding for the program, including investments in physical infrastructure and competitive salaries for teachers, is necessary to ensure the program continues to deliver quality services to children and families.

As an increasing number of families navigate the high cost of living and child care shortages, robust funding for Head Start would allow the program to continue providing much-needed educational and health services to children and give them the best start in life. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

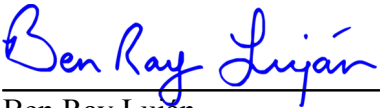
Sincerely,



Raphael Warnock  
United States Senator



Roger Marshall, M.D.  
United States Senator



Ben Ray Lujan  
United States Senator



Sheldon Whitehouse  
United States Senator



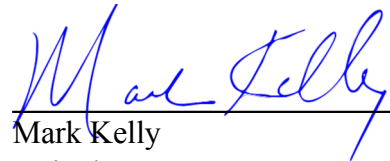
Angela D. Alsobrooks  
United States Senator



Jeanne Shaheen  
United States Senator



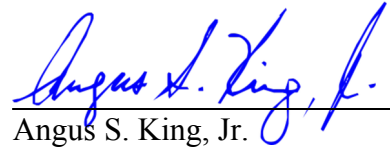
Lisa Blunt Rochester  
United States Senator



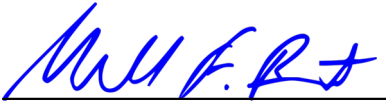
Mark Kelly  
United States Senator



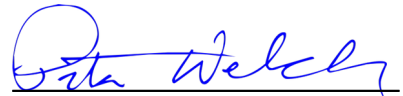
Cory A. Booker  
United States Senator



Angus S. King, Jr.  
United States Senator



Michael F. Bennet  
United States Senator



Peter Welch  
United States Senator



Jack Reed  
United States Senator



Elissa Slotkin  
United States Senator



Alex Padilla  
United States Senator



Christopher A. Coons  
United States Senator



Chris Van Hollen  
United States Senator



Andy Kim  
United States Senator



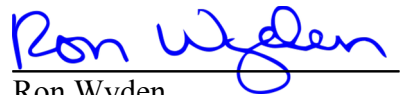
Adam B. Schiff  
United States Senator



Kirsten Gillibrand  
United States Senator



Ruben Gallego  
United States Senator



Ron Wyden  
United States Senator