

Minnesota's 4th District E-Report!

Congresswoman Betty McCollum

"Serving Minnesota's Families"



JUNE 20, 2003

Hot News!

McCollum Fights for Children's Safety

During consideration of the Head Start reauthorization bill in the Education and the Workforce Committee, Rep. Betty McCollum offered an amendment to provide funds to Head Start grantees to comply with federal requirements for the safety features, and the safe operation, of vehicles used to transport children enrolled in the program.

The Head Start Improvement Act of 1992 directed the Department of Health and Human Services to establish these standards. Unfortunately, no additional funds have been provided to Head Start grantees to meet the requirements.

"Children's safety should be our highest priority," McCollum said. "The federal government should provide Head Start programs with the dollars necessary to meet these federal safety requirements. This provision is common sense and it is the right thing to do. Failing to provide funds for Head Start transportation will force it to be cut altogether or compromise funding for other services in the program."

Head Start has proven success in improving children's early childhood learning. According to a survey of Head Start directors, only half of respondents indicated that they are going to be able to meet the requirements that go into effect in January 2004. Already unable to meet current needs because of inadequate funding, some Head Start programs have estimated that meeting the new federal requirements would consume one-third to one-half of their budgets.

Unfortunately, the amendment failed by a vote of 20 – 26.

In Betty's Words

"The only things growing under this president are the unemployment rate — 3 million lost private sector jobs since 2001— and the possibility for a \$500 billion federal budget deficit this year alone."

-- **Statement in response to recent tax cuts from the Bush Administration**



Land of Lakes Choirboys visited Washington this week and sang for Rep. Betty McCollum. The thirty-two ten year olds are from western Minnesota and have been practicing together for several years.

McCollum Meets with African Diplomats

Rep. Betty McCollum met with Ambassadors and Embassy officials from fourteen different African nations this week. Several countries represented at the meeting will receive funding for HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment and care as a result of the enactment of Public Law No: 108-025, the global AIDS initiative, which passed the House on 5/1/2003.

"This was an opportunity for a very diverse region to come together and discuss the many different needs they face. Despite the numerous obstacles these nations face, there was a tremendous amount of hope when looking towards the future," McCollum said.

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