



Minnesota's 4th District E-Report!

Congresswoman Betty McCollum

"Serving Minnesota's Families"



JUNE 6, 2003

Hot News!

Minnesota Children Left Behind in GOP Bill

Rep. Betty McCollum convened a State Capitol field hearing about proposed changes of Head Start by Republicans. According to testimony from parents, educators and advocates, thousands more Minnesota children could be left behind if the plan becomes law.

"From parents and educators alike, I hear loud and clear that Head Start is successful," said Congresswoman McCollum, a Member of the House Committee on Education and the Workforce. "Head Start does not need to be overhauled-it needs to be fully funded. Study after study show conclusively that our early investment in children pays off in healthier kids who arrive at school better prepared to learn. Head Start works. Why mess with a good thing?"

The House Committee on Education and the Workforce soon will consider HR2210, sponsored by Congressional Republicans and supported by the Bush administration. This bill would drastically change Head Start, an early childhood education program which currently serves approximately 13,000 children in Minnesota—less than half the children who are eligible.

Among the most radical changes to Head Start is a provision shifting the funding to a block grant to states. In Minnesota where state leaders are already cutting services for young children by 14% this year, such funding would be even less likely to be used for early childhood development. In addition, the legislation eliminates high quality program performance standards. The success of Head Start is often credited to its focus on comprehensive services for children and their families.

In addition to hearing from parents and educators, McCollum listened to testimony from Rob Grunewald of the Federal Reserve Bank. The Fed recently released a study finding that investment in quality early childhood development, such as Head Start, results in a 12 to 16 percent return in public and private dollars.



Rep. Betty McCollum joined Stephen Lewis, U.N. Special Envoy on HIV/AIDS in Africa and Singer/Songwriter Alicia Keyes in a discussion on orphans living with HIV. McCollum was successful in dedicating 10% of HIV/AIDS assistance to AIDS orphans over the next five years. McCollum included this provision in HR 1298, the U.S. Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria Act.

McCollum Works to Protect Health Coverage

Rep. Betty McCollum held a hearing this week in St. Paul with patients, labor representatives and care providers. Congress is expected to consider HR.660, legislation sponsored by Republicans that would exempt insurance plans sponsored by professionals and business associations from state oversight.

More than 470 national and local organizations have joined in opposing federal legislation that would allow these plans to operate without state oversight.

The Republican plan would preempt state requirements that Minnesota health plans cover maternity benefits, mammography screening and well-child care. There are no limits on how much insurers can charge sicker groups or how much insurers can increase an employer's premium when an employee gets sick, unlike current Minnesota law.

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