

In order to provide an incentive for states to continue investing in early childhood education, the School Readiness Act of 2003 also creates a state demonstration project that allows a limited number of states to voluntarily apply for and receive the option of coordinating Head Start programs with their own early childhood education programs, in exchange for an agreement to maintain or expand funding for early childhood education. This state demonstration project would be limited to states with a demonstrated investment in early childhood education and an established, pre-existing preschool system. Participating states would be barred from making funding cuts to early childhood education programs as a condition of their participation. Current Head Start grantees in participating states would be guaranteed funding during the first year of implementation of the demonstration project. In addition, States would be strongly encouraged to continue utilizing current service providers that have demonstrated the capacity to provide high quality Head Start services consistent with State guidelines for school preparedness for children entering kindergarten.

I am confident that this type of state control and collaboration will allow states to increase all-day Head Start classes, better coordinate state pre-school programs with Head Start, and improve the alignment of Head Start instruction with state K–12 standards. These types of reforms will not only improve the school readiness of participating children, but will also allow States that are held accountable for student performance under the No Child Left Behind Act to have the opportunity to do everything possible to ensure that their students succeed.

Once again, I would like to congratulate Mr. CASTLE on the introduction of this legislation. I look forward to working with him, and other members of the House, as we continue our efforts to strengthen Head Start and ensure that our nation's neediest children are prepared to succeed in school.

RECOGNITION OF JACK GOLDMAN

HON. JOHN SHIMKUS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 22, 2003

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I rise before you today to recognize Jack Goldman of Jefferson County, Illinois. Jack was recently inducted into the Senior Saints Hall of Fame of Jefferson County.

Jack received this honor for his lifelong service to others. He served in World War II as a combat engineer in the United States Army. Jack participated in the invasions of Leyte and Okinawa. After serving his country he returned to Mt. Vernon where he has literally and figuratively changed his community. Jack became involved with the Acquisition Committee for the Arts in the City Foundation and as chairman of the Sculpture Committee for Cedarhurst. He was named Counselor Emeritus for Mitchell Museum in 1995. Jack is an architect with Fields, Goldman, and Magee; and is also a member of the Mt. Vernon Rotary Club and the Downtown Development Corporation. He and his wife, Joan, are members of United Methodist Church.

I want to congratulate and thank Jack for all he has done and will continue to do for the people in his community. He is a saint to all who know him and is deserving of this prestigious honor.

INTRODUCTION OF H.R. 2210, THE SCHOOL READINESS ACT OF 2003

HON. MICHAEL N. CASTLE

OF DELAWARE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 22, 2003

Mr. CASTLE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the School Readiness Act of 2003, which reauthorizes the Head Start program. This legislation improves the Head Start Act by emphasizing that every child, regardless of their economic status, should have the best chance possible to succeed. I would like to thank the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER), the Chairman of the Committee on Education and the Workforce, for his assistance in developing this legislation.

In 1965, Head Start was created to give economically disadvantaged children access to the same educational, health, nutritional, social, and other services that were enjoyed by their more affluent peers. The goal of the program was, as it remains today, to provide children a solid foundation that will prepare them for success in school and later in life. As the centerpiece of the Federal government's efforts to support quality early childhood education for our nation's most disadvantaged youth, Head Start has served nearly 20 million low-income children and their families. Currently, Head Start serves over 900,000 children every day and has nearly 1,500 grantees across the United States. In my home state of Delaware, Head Start programs serve 1,594 children, with an additional 464 four year olds receiving assistance through state government funding.

We all can agree on the need for Head Start and its astounding successes. We must also recognize that Head Start can produce even greater results for children. Students who attend Head Start programs do start school more prepared than those with similar backgrounds that do not attend Head Start. However, Head Start students continue to enter kindergarten well below national norms in school readiness. By moving to close this school readiness gap, this bill will improve results for almost a million Head Start students across the nation.

The School Readiness Act of 2003 strengthens Head Start's academic focus while maintaining its comprehensive nature, eliminates out of date requirements and unnecessary demands on local grantees, improves teacher quality, demands grantee accountability while providing assistance to those that are underachieving, increases funding for Head Start, requires collaboration between early childhood education and care providers, and creates a demonstration project allowing some states to further coordinate state early childhood programs with Head Start.

Under this bill, Head Start children will enter school with demonstrated prereading, language, and pre-mathematics skills, as well as the benefits from the nutritional and health services that Head Start has always provided. Children's progress will no longer be based on

arbitrary and out of date performance measures, but on scientifically based and clear criteria that will enable parents and teachers to accurately view a child's progress.

This bill will also require Head Start teachers to be more prepared to equip young children for school. By 2008, 50 percent of all Head Start teachers must have a baccalaureate degree, and after three years no new teachers will be hired without an associate degree.

This bill also improves the accountability of Head Start programs. As under current law, local grantees will be responsible for their use of the federal funds. Those that are identified as underachieving, however, will receive additional assistance. This bill demonstrates our commitment to Head Start by authorizing a \$202 million increase, making it a \$6.87 billion program.

Additionally, Head Start centers will now increase the likelihood of children starting kindergarten at the same level. This will be done through the efforts of Head Start programs to coordinate and reach out to other early childhood education and care providers, local school districts, local museums and libraries, and community and faith-based organizations. These efforts will be focused on the improved instruction and school readiness of children, as well as teacher training and quality improvement.

For some states, this bill will also provide the opportunity for increased integration of preschool programs with Head Start. This opportunity will only be available to states that have exhibited a substantial dedication to early childhood education and care through financial investment, the creation of statewide school readiness standards, professional development requirements for early childhood teachers, and have demonstrated inter-agency coordination. States that take advantage of this opportunity will be required to maintain their current investment, thus protecting Head Start from state budget cuts. In addition, Head Start grantees that have not exhibited any egregious or uncorrected deficiencies on Health and Human Services evaluations over the last five years would continue to receive funding during the first year of the state demonstration program.

The School Readiness Act of 2003 builds upon the reforms of previous reauthorizations of Head Start, as well as the recommendations of President Bush. I would like to take this opportunity to thank President Bush, and First Lady Laura Bush, for their leadership on this issue. The success of the White House Summit on Early Childhood Cognitive Development, which brought together hundreds of educators, researchers, librarians, business leaders and federal officials to help us better understand the issues surrounding early childhood learning, is a credit to this Administration.

I look forward to working with the members of the Education and Workforce Committee and other members of Congress as we work to craft this legislation that will improve the school readiness of disadvantaged children. I urge my colleagues to join me and the other original cosponsors in support of the School Readiness Act of 2003.