

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Chairman, I want to thank the gentleman from California (Mr. FILNER) for offering this amendment and the chairman, the gentleman from Delaware (Mr. CASTLE) for supporting it.

We know the base bill increases teacher quality requirements, and we also know that we are not doing nearly enough to help Head Start programs hire and keep these more qualified teachers. So I support my colleague's interests and understanding on making this happen.

Mr. CASTLE. Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. FILNER).

The amendment was agreed to.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. The Committee will rise informally.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. TERRY) assumed the Chair.

ENROLLED BILLS SIGNED

Mr. Trandahl, Clerk of the House, reported and found truly enrolled bills of the House of the following titles, which were thereupon signed by the Speaker:

H.R. 3761. An act to provide special rules for disaster relief employment under the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 for individuals displaced by Hurricane Katrina.

H.R. 3768. An act to provide emergency tax relief for persons affected by Hurricane Katrina.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Committee will resume its sitting.

SCHOOL READINESS ACT OF 2005

The Committee resumed its sitting.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 9 printed in House Report 109-229.

AMENDMENT NO. 9 OFFERED BY MS. MILLENDER-MCDONALD

Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD. Mr. Chairman, I offer an amendment.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Amendment No. 9 offered by Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD:

At the end of the bill, add the following new section:

SEC. ____ . IMPROVING HEAD START ACCESS FOR HOMELESS AND FOSTER CHILDREN.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—Section 637 of the Head Start Act (42 U.S.C. 9832) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(18) The term ‘family’ means all persons living in the same household who are—

“(A) supported by the income of at least 1 parent or guardian (including any relative acting in place of a parent, such as a grandparent) of a child enrolling or participating in the Head Start program; and

“(B) related to the parent or guardian by blood, marriage, or adoption.

“(19) The term ‘homeless child’ means a child described in section 725(2) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11434a(2)).

“(20) The term ‘homeless family’ means the family of a homeless child.”.

(b) ALLOTMENT OF FUNDS; LIMITATIONS ON ASSISTANCE.—

(1) QUALITY IMPROVEMENT.—Section 640(a)(3) of the Head Start Act (42 U.S.C. 9835(a)(3)) is amended—

(A) in subparagraph (B)—

(i) in clause (ii), by inserting “children in foster care, children referred to Head Start programs by child welfare agencies,” after “background”; and

(ii) in clause (v), by inserting “, including collaboration to increase program participation by underserved populations, including homeless children, eligible children in foster care, and children referred to Head Start programs by child welfare agencies” before the period; and

(B) in subparagraph (C)—

(i) in clause (ii)(IV)—

(I) by inserting “homeless children, children in foster care, children referred to Head Start programs by child welfare agencies,” after “dysfunctional families”; and

(II) by inserting “and families” after “communities”;

(ii) in clause (v)—

(I) by inserting “homeless children, children in foster care, children referred to Head Start programs by child welfare agencies,” after “dysfunctional families”; and

(II) by inserting “and families” after “communities”;

(iii) by redesignating clause (vi) as clause (viii); and

(iv) by inserting after clause (v) the following:

“(vi) To conduct outreach to homeless families and to increase Head Start program participation by homeless children.”.

(2) COLLABORATION GRANTS.—Section 640(a)(5)(C)(iv) of the Head Start Act (42 U.S.C. 9835(a)(5)(C)(iv)) is amended—

(A) by inserting “child welfare (including child protective services),” after “child care,”;

(B) by inserting “home-based services (including home visiting services),” after “family literacy services”; and

(3) ALLOCATION OF FUNDS.—Section 640(g)(2) of the Head Start Act (42 U.S.C. 9835(g)(2)) is amended—

(A) in subparagraph (C)—

(i) by inserting “organizations and agencies providing family support services, child abuse prevention services, protective services, and foster care, and” after “(including”;

(ii) by striking “and public entities serving children with disabilities” and inserting “, public entities, and individuals serving children with disabilities and homeless children (including local educational agency liaisons designated under section 722(g)(1)(J)(ii) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11432(g)(1)(J)(ii))”;

(B) in subparagraph (H), by inserting “(including the local educational agency liaison designated under section 722(g)(1)(J)(ii) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11432(g)(1)(J)(ii))” after “community involved”.

(c) RESEARCH, DEMONSTRATIONS, AND EVALUATION.—Section 649 of the Head Start Act (42 U.S.C. 9844) is amended in subsection (a)(1)(B), by striking “disabilities” and inserting “disabilities, homeless children, children who have been abused or neglected, and children in foster care”.

(d) REPORTS.—Section 650(a) of the Head Start Act (42 U.S.C. 9846(a)) is amended—

(1) in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by striking “disabled and” and inserting “disabled children, homeless children, children in foster care, and”;

(2) in paragraph (8), by inserting “homelessness, whether the child is in foster care or was referred by a child welfare agency,” after “background”.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to House Resolution 455, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD).

Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume, and I first want to thank my colleague and friend, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY), as well as the chairman of the subcommittee, for allowing me to come before the body today for this very important amendment.

Today, I am offering an amendment that addresses one of our Nation's greatest needs: providing a sound educational foundation for children who are homeless or in foster care. There are many obstacles these children must overcome, but access to early education should not be one of them.

Quite simply, my amendment does the following: it encourages Head Start grantees to reduce barriers by directing them to increase their outreach to homeless and foster children. It encourages coordination between Head Start grantees and community service providers and homeless and foster children. It increases the coordination of these populations as they transition out of Head Start to elementary school and increases reporting requirements. It allows homeless children and foster children to be automatically eligible for Head Start.

Mr. Chairman, the early years of a child's life are critical to their development. Homeless and foster youth face monumental hurdles, starting with their need for stability, emotional reassurance, and access to educational resources. Because of these inherent challenges, homeless children and foster youth are twice as likely to have a learning disability and are three times as likely to have emotional and behavioral problems that can contribute to long-term learning disabilities. We can help these kids by identifying them early and making sure that they are enrolled in Head Start. The work we do now for these kids will help them throughout their life.

This, Mr. Chairman, is an investment worth making, but we must make this investment now. The numbers are staggering. Tragically, an estimated 1.4 million children experience homelessness each year. More than 40 percent of the children in homeless shelters are under the age of 5. Currently, only 2 percent of the more than 900,000 students served by Head Start are children identified as homeless.

In my home State of California, there are more homeless children today than ever before. The California Department of Housing and Community Development estimates that there are 80,000 to 95,000 homeless children statewide. The vast majority of these children come from homeless families that consist of a single mother and her children.