

## **RIGHTS, RAISES, RESPECT**

**News and Issues for the Early Care and Education Workforce**

**A monthly electronic newsletter**

**From the Center for the Child Care Workforce (CCW)**

**A project of the AFT Educational Foundation**

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Please feel free to send this to anyone you think would be interested in supporting our efforts. Visit our web site at [www.ccw.org](http://www.ccw.org) for the latest information on the early care and education workforce, CCW/AFTEF activities and our online order form for our publications. (E-Newsletters you receive from CCW/AFTEF will be sent by [ccw@v2.listbox.com](mailto:ccw@v2.listbox.com).)

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### **THIS MONTH:**

#### ***Federal Initiatives:***

- Head Start Bill on its Way to Reauthorization
- The House Works on Teacher Quality in the Higher Education Act
- Loan Forgiveness for Head Start Teachers
- New Legislation to Expand and Improve Pre-K Programs

#### ***State Initiatives:***

- Advocates in Wichita March for Better Compensation
- California Advocates Create One VOICE
- Loss of Funding for Washington State's Career and Wage Ladder

#### ***Federal Initiatives:***

##### **Head Start Bill on its Way to Reauthorization**

On June 12, 2003, the House Subcommittee on Education Reform approved by a party-line vote of 11-9, legislation that would reauthorize Head Start. The measure, H.R. 2210, introduced by Rep. Mike Castle (R-Del.), increases funding for Head Start and Early Head Start if new money is available. It also raises standards by mandating that all new Head Start teachers attain at least an associate degree within three years of enactment, and that one-half of all teachers must have a bachelor's degree by 2008.

The approved measure removed a controversial provision that would have turned Head Start into a block grant and given states sole control of the funds. Instead, it calls for a pilot project that will grant eight states full control over the federal preschool program. Only states that have demonstrated a commitment to high standards for the Head Start program will be eligible. Rep. Todd Platts (R-Penn.) offered an amendment that to qualify for the pilot project, states would need to meet or exceed Head Start teacher qualification standards.

Democrats believe that this pilot project will eventually segue into an entire system of block grants – a step that would remove the federal oversight that Head Start has had for the last 38 years, and one that advocates fear would diminish the federal commitment to early care and education.

### **The House Works on Teacher Quality in the Higher Education Act**

The House Education and Workforce Committee is gearing up for the upcoming reauthorization of the Higher Education Act by tackling the issues in stages – most recently, the issue of teacher quality in K-12 education. The House Subcommittee on 21<sup>st</sup> Century Competitiveness passed unanimously by voice vote the Ready to Teach Act (H.R. 2211) introduced by Rep. Phil Gingrey (R-Georgia). This bill, which reauthorizes Title II of the Higher Education Act, establishes a competitive grant process that will be distributed to states in order to improve the quality of their K-12 teacher preparation programs. States would also be allowed to use the funds toward improving the quality and certification of pre-K teachers, as well as improving and expanding the higher education programs that prepare them; \$45 million a year will be used for this purpose.

Although an amendment to expand loan forgiveness to teachers in Head Start and other pre-K programs serving children in high-poverty schools failed, the inclusion of the pre-K workforce in the Ready to Teach Act does not go unrecognized. We are excited about this new commitment and will work with our colleagues to ensure its longevity. We are also excited about further attempts in the House for loan forgiveness for the early care and education workforce. Please review the article below for more details.

### **Loan Forgiveness for Head Start Teachers**

Representative Rosa DeLauro (D-Conn.) recently introduced H.R. 2291, a bill that would allow up to \$5,000 in loan forgiveness for teachers who work in a Head Start Program for five consecutive years. This measure is a companion to a Senate bill, S. 140, introduced earlier this year by Senators Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) and George Voinovich (R-Ohio). H.R. 2291 has been referred to the House Education and Workforce Committee and currently has 37 sponsors.

### **New Legislation to Expand and Improve Pre-K Programs**

Representative Robert Andrews (D-NJ) recently introduced the Prekindergarten Access Act of 2003 (H.R. 1845). If passed, this bill would amend Title V of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) to include a provision that will offer states grants to “establish or expand” prekindergarten programs.

Along with creating an outline on how the state would expand existing programs, grantees must describe how the state will help eligible prekindergarten providers attract and retain qualified prekindergarten teachers. In line with giving significance to retention of the workforce, local applicants must describe how they will provide assurance that each individual hired is “qualified to teach children at the prekindergarten level.”

Allowable uses of funds include helping prekindergarten teachers pursue and meet the credential and degree requirements established by the state, and providing a stipend for attaining educational or professional development.

The bill calls for \$2 billion this year, with an increase to \$4 billion in 2004, \$5 billion in 2005, \$8 billion in 2006 and \$10 billion in 2007. In order to receive funding, grantees must meet recommended teacher/child ratios. The bill has been referred to the Subcommittee on Education Reform of the House Education and Workforce Committee.

***State Initiatives:***

**Advocates in Wichita March for Better Compensation**

In honor of Worthy Wage Day (May 1, 2003), over 200 advocates in Wichita, Kansas joined forces in a march to raise awareness about low wages and high turnover in the early care and education field. The march was organized by the Child Care Association of Wichita and Sedgwick County, and advocates were successful in getting nearly 40 concerned citizens to join the Worthy Wage Network. Great job, Kansas!

**California Advocates Create One VOICE**

VOICE (Voices Organized to Improve Child Care and Early Education) is a California-based coalition of child care advocates, union representatives, child care worker organizations and other groups that have joined together to improve the quality of child care programs and jobs, as well as parents' access to affordable child care.

The coalition, originally called the Child Care Organizing Work Group, was convened in 2001 by the California Labor Federation to address the need for state policies that would help unions organize the child care workforce, and is now chaired by the Labor Project for Working Families.

Currently, the Coalition is working on a legislative proposal for broad-based child care reform – the primary features of which would be to congregate child care workers, establish an “employer of record,” create a registry of the center- and home based child care workforce in California, and rationalize reimbursements by allotting similar reimbursement rates for basic levels of service to similar categories of providers.

For more information on the VOICE Coalition contact Netsy Firestein, Director of the Labor Project for Working Families, at 510-643-6814.

**Loss of Funding for Washington State's Career and Wage Ladder**

Governor Gary Locke of Washington has announced that he will not renew funding of the Early Childhood Education Career and Wage Ladder pilot project, which he implemented in 1999. The project, which has aimed to improve the quality of early childhood education by investing in the workforce, and which was based on components of the Military Child Care model, placed teachers on grid-based career ladders that linked wage increments to experience, job responsibility and relevant education. The project, a public/private partnership, called for the state to pay a share of wage increments based on education, while center-based employers paid a share based on experience attained by employees at their center. Over 100 centers and approximately 1,500 teachers across Washington participated in the project, with grant awards ranging from \$15,000 to \$90,000.

The Governor's initial investment of \$4 million for this project with welfare reinvestment funds (discretionary money not requiring legislative approval) was doubled to \$8 million for 2001-2003. In announcing his decision not to renew funding, Governor Locke noted that the project had served 6-7% of the state's child care centers, an impact that he and his administration did not consider significant enough. The cuts faced by the state's welfare system also played a part in the Governor's decision.

Advocates remain active in trying to fund this program. One approach they have taken is a grassroots campaign called the *Early Learning and Care Initiative: 10 Cents for Kids – We Can Do That!* This campaign, to fund early learning programs in the City of Seattle as well as the Career and Wage Ladder, is expected to raise \$7 million a year from a 10-cent tax on espresso beverages. The Initiative will be on the September 16 ballot.

For more information on the Career and Wage Ladder and other Washington State Initiatives, visit the Economic Opportunity Institute at [www.eoionline.org](http://www.eoionline.org).

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The Center for the Child Care Workforce (CCW) was founded in 1978 as the Child Care Employee Project and in 2002 merged with the American Federation of Teachers (AFTEF). CCW/AFTEF is a nonprofit research, education and advocacy organization committed to improving early care and education quality by upgrading the compensation, working conditions and training of early childhood professionals.