



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,

A Project of the AFT Educational Foundation (CCW/AFTEF)

May 2007

THIS MONTH

Making the Connection - Advocacy & Outreach

- Worthy Wage Day 2007, A Smashing Success!

In the States

- Texas Introduces K-Plus Bill
- Money Allocated for San Francisco's Early Childhood Teacher Wages

Policy & Legislation

- Head Start Reauthorization Passes in the House with Improvements
- Early Childhood Educators Recognized by Congress

Research & Resources

- National Teacher Preparation Report
- Grant Opportunity for Low-Income Mothers Pursuing Education
- Teacher-to-Teacher Early Childhood Education Summer Workshops



MAKING THE CONNECTION – ADVOCACY & RESEARCH

Worthy Wage Day 2007, A Smashing Success!

On May 1, Worthy Wage activists nationwide sent a message—"We're Hanging by a Thread! Worthy Wages for Early Childhood Educators!" Drawing national attention to the early childhood staffing crisis, the campaign was coordinated by AFT First Class Teachers, an associate membership program for early childhood educators offered by the American Federation of Teachers (AFT).

Taking advantage of one of the biggest audiences in morning television, AFT members made an appearance on the "Today" show to let the public know that early childhood educators deserve better pay, benefits and respect.

In an interview on the "Today" show plaza with Al Roker, New York City child care provider Lourdes Lebron, who is part of an effort by the United Federation of Teachers to organize thousands of home providers in the city, spoke for the group. A provider with 25-years of experience, Lebron told Roker the group was from the AFT and were there for Worthy Wage Day.

The participants also had fun with musical guest, Michael Bublé, giving him an AFT hat after he shared that his mother is a teacher.

Miles away in Washington, D.C., Worthy Wage Day was recognized by a bipartisan resolution in the U.S. House of Representatives. The resolution, H. Con. Res. 112, passed with 345 House members voting in favor and 73 members voting against it.

Visit www.firstclassteachers.org to see pictures and highlights of Worthy Wage Day and to send a thank-you letter to your representative.

IN THE STATES

Texas Introduces K-Plus Bill

On April 24, 2007, legislators from Texas introduced their version of a Kindergarten-Plus bill. HB 3390, introduced by State Rep. Mike Villarreal and Senator Rodney Ellis introduced legislation (HB 3390 and SB 1756 respectively) to establish a three-year pilot project under which three high-poverty independent school districts—San Antonio, Houston and Dallas—would be eligible. The pilot adds 40 instructional days to the kindergarten school year, and splits the extra time between the beginning and end of the school year for qualifying students.

The additional class days provide educationally disadvantaged students more time to work on literacy, numeracy and social skills. The bill calls for teachers to be qualified



and compensated at the same rates as teachers in regular full-day kindergarten programs. The teachers will also be entitled to two additional professional development days each school year.

Jennifer Rodriguez of the Texas Federation of Teachers (TFT) says the TFT supports this measure because “it prepares students to succeed in school and makes a good in-road to erasing the achievement gap between advantaged and disadvantaged children that starts as children begin school.”

If you are from Texas and want to join the movement to establish a Kindergarten-Plus in Texas schools, contact Jennifer Rodriguez at jrodriguez@tft.org.

To read the bill, visit

<http://www.legis.state.tx.us/tlodocs/80R/billtext/html/HB03390I.htm>.

Money Allocated for San Francisco’s Early Childhood Teacher Wages

The San Francisco First 5 Commission recently approved its early childhood budget, which included a new line item: over \$1 million dedicated to improving teachers’ wages. California Federation of Teachers (CFT) members, along with parents and advocates made sure the commission heard their concerns loud and clear—money must be allocated for teacher salaries now!

Many members, like Local 6361 secretary treasurer Marie Chavez, gave compelling testimony about the challenges she faces every day as an early childhood educator because her wages are so low and San Francisco is such an expensive place to live. Joy Wi, also of Local 6361, told commission members that although she has her bachelor’s degree in child development and had expected to stay in this profession until retirement, the low wages are forcing her to look for employment elsewhere.

This event proved that there is no substitute for provider involvement in early childhood education advocacy. The strong and unified voices of the CFT’s early childhood members made a difference!

POLICY & LEGISLATION

Head Start Reauthorization Passes in the House with Improvements

On May 2, 2007, with a vote of 365-48, the U.S. House of Representatives passed a bill that would reauthorize Head Start for the first time since 1998. Highlights of the bill include:

An increase of funding to \$6.9 billion allowing Head Start to include as many as 10,000 more children;

* A requirement to use 25 percent of the new money to raise teacher salaries and benefits;

* A requirement that at least 50 percent of all Head Start teachers have a bachelor’s degree by 2013;

* Elimination of the controversial standardized test, the National Reporting System (NRS), implemented in 2003 as an initiative by President Bush to assess Head Start



programs;

- * Further alignment of Head Start to the K-12 curricula;
- * Expansion of professional development opportunities for Head Start employees; and
- * Exclusion of language that allows discrimination in hiring.

Since the House's move to increase teacher qualifications in Head Start, we have been calling on lawmakers support teachers efforts to meet these higher standards by providing the appropriate supports and funds to help teachers achieve and retain those qualifications. The new requirement calling for a percentage of the new money to be used specifically for teacher salaries and benefits is a step in the right direction.

Before becoming law, the Senate must first pass their version of the bill, S. 556, and then the House and the Senate must "conference" on a compromise. As always, we will keep you informed as this bill and other relevant bills move forward.

To read H.R. 1429, visit

http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=110_cong_bills&docid=f:h1429eh.txt.pdf.

Early Childhood Educators Recognized by Congress

On Tuesday, May 1, 2007, the U.S. House of Representatives once again voted on a bill that supports an increase in wages for one of the lowest paid professions in education: early childhood educators. The vote on, H.Con.Res. 112, calling for a National Child Care Worthy Wage Day asks Congress to honor early childhood care and education staff and programs in their communities and to work to resolve the early childhood care and education staff compensation crisis.

The resolution was a bipartisan effort supported by Rep. Carolyn McCarthy (D-N.Y.) and Todd Platts (R-Pa.). Both members agree with the AFT that adequate compensation to early childhood program staff should be a priority and early childhood educators should receive compensation commensurate with such training and experience.

H.Con.Res. 112 passed by a vote of 345-73. To see how your representative voted, go to:

<http://clerk.house.gov/evs/2007/roll271.xml>

RESEARCH & RESOURCES

National Teacher Preparation Report

A new document from researchers at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's FPG Child Development Institute provides a detailed picture of the nation's early childhood teacher preparation programs. The national report is accompanied by 45 state reports. The reports provide basic descriptive information about program, faculty, and student characteristics of early childhood teacher preparation programs. The national report updates the groundbreaking study of the 1999 National Center for Early Development & Learning, which provided the first nationally representative data



on the goals, capacity, supports and challenges of early childhood teacher preparation programs. The national report is available at http://www.fpg.unc.edu/~npc/pdfs/national_report.pdf and the state reports are available at http://www.fpg.unc.edu/~npc/pages/state_reports.cfm.

Grant Opportunity for Low-Income Mothers Pursuing Education

The Patsy Takemoto Mink Education Foundation for Low Income Women and Children is accepting applications for Education Support Awards. Low-income mothers who are pursuing education or training are eligible to apply. The foundation will award five grants of up to \$2000 each in 2007. Applications must be postmarked no later than July 1, 2007. For application information, see <http://www.ptmfoundation.net>.

Teacher-to-Teacher Early Childhood Education Summer Workshops

The U.S. Department of Education's Teacher-to-Teacher Initiative is collaborating with prominent teachers and school district officials to bring you summer workshops designed specifically for early childhood educators.

These workshops provide professional development opportunities in specific content areas and include research-based practices that teachers across the country have applied in their schools and classrooms to ensure academic achievement for all students.

The workshops will be held in Albuquerque, N.M. on June 5-6, 2007 and in Louisville, Ky, on July 19-20, 2007.

For more information visit www.ed.gov/teacherinitiative.

SOURCES & CONTRIBUTORS

CFT Early Educator, FPG Child Development Institute, Leslie Getzinger, Dan Gursky, Jennifer Luciano, Dori Mornan, Jennifer Rodriguez.

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 Educational Foundation (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.