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National Head Start Association Applauds FY'15 Omnibus Appropriations Bill

Solid funding level enables centers to maintain current services under ever-rising costs

(Washington, DC) -- Today, Congress sent a FY'15 omnibus appropriations bill to President Obama that includes steady funding for Head Start and Early Head Start programs. The final funding agreement includes \$8.598 billion for Head Start and Early Head Start programs, a solid funding level that will enable centers to maintain current services to vulnerable children and families under ever-rising costs. The funding also will support grantees as they look to strengthen quality in their programs and continue to recover from the shock of sequestration.

A critical component of this national investment is its support for the recently announced Early Head Start expansion and Child Care partnerships first appropriated last year. This funding enables Early Head Start programs, which now serve only 4% of eligible infants and toddlers, to expand and partner with local child care agencies to increase access to services and improve the overall quality of care available for this age group.

“This steady funding is critical to maintaining Head Start’s quality comprehensive early learning services that have transformed over 31 million young lives and their families in diverse communities across the country,” said NHTA executive director Yasmina Vinci. “Today’s bipartisan action reflects our continued national commitment to ensuring every child, regardless of circumstances at birth, is given a window of opportunity to succeed in school and in life.”

Led by House Appropriations Chair Rep. Hal Rogers and Senate Appropriations Chair Sen. Barbara Mikulski, the FY'15 omnibus appropriations bill strengthens a shared commitment to opening the window of opportunity for our most vulnerable children.

“Congress faced a great deal of difficult choices in wrapping up Fiscal Year 2015 funding, but taking care of our nation’s most vulnerable children is always a priority,” said House Appropriations Chairman Hal Rogers.

“Every child deserves the chance to succeed. That’s why I’m so proud to announce continued robust funding for Head Start. As a former social worker in Baltimore, I’ve seen first-hand how children's lives are changed by Head Start. They help our nation’s most vulnerable children keep up with their age group in school. They provide kids with needed health care, immunizations, and hearing checks. And they provide nutritious meals for children who might otherwise go hungry. Approximately 950,000 kids nationwide – including more than 11,000 Maryland children – depend on Head Start for important early childhood education, health, and nutrition services. Continuing our strong investments to Head Start, which makes such strong investments in our children’s lives, will change the lives of children everywhere,” said Senate Appropriations Chairwoman Barbara Mikulski.

*Additional information about the **National Head Start Association** can be found at www.nhsa.org.*

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