Gus Hawkins was one of the most profound public policymakers that ever served in this House. You heard Pete Stark allude to some of that legislation. That legislation has been good for America, it’s been good for African Americans, it’s been good for this House.

I am so proud that when Gus Hawkins decided that he was not going to stand for reelection in 1990, he called me and he said, ‘I’m calling you first because I believe that you would do well representing this district by serving as a Member of Congress.’ And so I have tried to live up to his legacy.

Gus Hawkins, however, was very, very strong. He understood how government works. He was understated. He got along with everybody. He made a lot of friends in this House. And people responded to him in a terrific manner.

And so I am standing here in great sympathy and in pain, because I know that we wanted to get up here one more time when we focused on the Hawkins-Humphrey Act with Barney Frank in the Frank Financial Services Committee. We were not able to do that. And so all that we can do now is honor him with this tribute and say, ‘Rest well, Gus.’ I would request a moment of silence, please.

That would have voted ‘aye.’

Mr. FENNEY changed his vote from ‘nay’ to ‘yea.’

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. JOHNSON of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, unfortunately earlier today, November 14, 2007, I was unable to cast my votes and wish the Record to reflect my intentions had I been able to vote.

Had I been present for rollcall No. 1086 on order No. 1, the Previous Question on H. Res. 813, providing for consideration of the conference report to accompany H.R. 1429, I would have voted ‘nay.’

Had I been present for rollcall No. 1087 on the motion to suspend the rules and agree to H. Res. 812, Expressing sympathy and pledging to support the victims of the devastating flooding in southern Mexico, I would have voted ‘aye.’

Had I been present for rollcall No. 1088 on the motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 3320, Support for the Museum of the History of Polish Jews Act, I would have voted ‘aye.’

Had I been present for rollcall No. 1089 on the motion to suspend the rules and agree to order No. 1, the Previous Question on H. Res. 811, Condemning the November 6, 2007, terrorist bombing in Afghanistan and expressing condolences to the people of Afghanistan and the members of the Wolesi Jirga, I would have voted ‘aye.’

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 1429, IMPROVING HEAD START FOR SCHOOL READINESS ACT OF 2007

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 813, I call up the conference report on the bill (H.R. 1429)
to reauthorize the Head Start Act, to improve program quality, to expand access, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill. The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SERRANO). Pursuant to House Resolution 633, the conference report is considered read.

(For conference report and statement, see proceedings of the House of November 9, 2007, at page H13462.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KILDEE) and the gentleman from California (Mr. McKEON) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Michigan.

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I’m pleased to be here today to reauthorize Head Start. And I know that everyone agrees that it has been far too long since we have authorized the Head Start Act.

Head Start has served millions of our most vulnerable children and families well for 42 years. More recently, Early Head Start has done the same for infants and toddlers.

These are our country’s premiere early childhood programs, Mr. Speaker. Head Start and this bill will make it work even better.

Nothing is more critical to a child’s success than a great teacher, and this bill will ensure that by 2013, half of Head Start teachers nationwide will have bachelor’s degrees. This will improve professional development so that teachers can keep up with the best practices in early childhood education.

The bill increases funding for Early Head Start so that children will receive comprehensive services during the most critical stages of brain development.

Mr. Speaker, our predecessors 42 years ago initiated Head Start even before we realized, as we do today, that early and regular stimulation was critical to the very physical development of the brain.

Head Start requires the Secretary to update early learning standards using the best science, and puts an end to the ill-advised National Reporting System. It authorizes significant increases in resources so that we can expand access. And I want to work with our friends on the Appropriations Committee to do just that.

It enhances the quality of Head Start boards, while maintaining a shared governance structure that empowers parents.

And it is especially important to me that the bill prioritizes significant resources for Indian and migrant and seasonal Head Start programs, both to expand existing programs and create new programs, so that these children, whose communities face such terrific challenges, can grow up to help their communities overcome those challenges.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Chairman MILLER and Senator KENNEDY, Senator DODD, Ranking Members McKEON and CASTLE, and Senator ENZI and Senator ALEXANDER, my staff and theirs, and all the conferees and their staffs for their hard work. I especially want to thank Lloyd Horwich, who has worked so hard with me to produce this legislation. We do our best work in this Congress when we work in a bipartisan way, and we do our best work, especially in education, when we work in a bipartisan way. It’s been my pleasure through the years to have the advantage of working with Mr. CASTLE of California. We’ve grown to really commit ourselves to education and we trust one another and like one another, which is very important.

I was privileged, Mr. Speaker, to introduce this bill in March with Chairman MILLER, Governor CASTLE, Mr. McKEON and many others, and look forward to its becoming law very soon. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. McKEON. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Since 1965, the Head Start program has been instrumental in our efforts to close the gap between disadvantaged children and their peers. This program provides health, developmental and educational services to low-income and at-risk children before they enroll in school in order to help close the readiness gap. Head Start helps establish a foundation for these children’s future success.

This conference report is the product of a bipartisan collaboration and compromise. I’d like to thank Chairman MILLER, along with Mr. CASTLE and Mr. KILDEE. And I appreciate Mr. KILDEE’s words, and I appreciate the opportunity I’ve had to get to know him and work with him closely over the years. I thank them for their work to strengthen and improve Head Start.

I’d also like to acknowledge the staff on both sides for their instrumental role in writing this legislation. Their work was critical to producing such a strong, widely supported measure. On my staff, I’d like to recognize Kirsten Duncan, along with Susan Ross and James Bergeron, for their tireless efforts on this legislation.

Studies have shown that children enrolled in Head Start do make some progress. We also know that even greater results are possible.

With this in mind, the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act will strengthen Head Start’s academic standards by emphasizing cognitive development and the results of scientifically valid research in topics critical to children’s school readiness. The conference report will improve teacher quality by ensuring a greater number of Head Start teachers have degrees and are adequately trained in early childhood development, particularly in teaching the fundamentals.

Despite the many successes of the Head Start program, its reputation has, unfortunately, been marred in recent years by instances of financial abuse and mismanagement. In commu-
reins of our Nation to future generations, we must invest in that future by guaranteeing every child a chance to succeed.

I know that in my hometown of Louisville, Kentucky, thousands and thousands of young children have been denied an adequate education for schooling that they might not otherwise have gotten because of the wonderful training they received in Head Start. It is not just a head start; it is a very strong foundation to success in education and success in life. And careers our young children may select.

So I'm proud to stand here in the House of Representatives, the people's House, and urge my colleagues to support a program which will help ensure that the people we represent are able to enjoy the prosperity and the happiness that our Founding Fathers hoped they would have.

With that, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting Head Start and begin restoring faith in the future for millions of American families.

Mr. McKEON. Mr. Speaker, I am happy now to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Delaware (Mr. CASTLE), the ranking member on the sub-committee. The same time, thank him for the key role he played in getting this legislation to this point.

Mr. CASTLE. I thank the distinguished gentleman from California for yielding and for his work on this legislation.

I do rise to ask my colleague to support this bipartisan conference report before us today. Like almost every other Member of this body, I believe strongly in the benefits of this program. I trust that the conference report on H.R. 1429, the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act, will improve Head Start by emphasizing that every child, regardless of his or her economic status, should have the best chance to succeed.

As Mr. McKEON stated, this report is a byproduct of bipartisan collaboration and compromise. I would also like to thank Chairman MILLER, along with Mr. KILDEE and Mr. McKEON, as well as the committee staff for their work on Head Start. I see Ms. WOOLSEY in the room. I have worked with her on this issue before, too, and thank her.

This legislation builds upon efforts made in the past several Congresses to address weaknesses in the Head Start program and improves upon language contained in the bill to help make the program even stronger. Specifically, this report preserves and enhances the vital role of parents in ensuring the success of Head Start by establishing both a governing body and a policy council, each with specific detailed responsibilities. This conference report also maintains the current income eligibility requirement to provide services to those who need them the most.

Additional legislation that curriculum and other materials used in Head Start classrooms are based on the principles of scientific research and scientifically valid research. Equally important, this conference agreement ensures that a greater number of Head Start teachers are adequately trained and educated in early childhood development, and that curriculum and other materials applied to Early Head Start as well. Finally, consistent with the motion to instruct I introduced last week, this conference agreement limits the compensation of a Head Start employee to Executive Level II, that of an Assistant Secretary, currently $168,000.

Mr. Speaker, the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act builds upon the success of the Head Start program and will assist in having the program achieve even greater results. I urge my colleagues to support the passage of this conference report.

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS).

88 other Members of the House. I want to thank the gentleman from Michigan for yielding and I also want to commend him for introducing this legislation, H.R. 1429, the Head Start for School Readiness Act.

I applaud the senators in both Chambers for crafting such a strong bill that builds on the accomplishments of Head Start and promotes the success of young children. It is clear from this product that you and your staffs have toiled long and hard to strengthen the quality of the Head Start program, and I say to you, well done.

Foremost, let me thank you for maintaining the role of parents in governing Head Start. For more than 40 years, one of the most unique and important aspects of the Head Start program has been its emphasis on parental involvement. I worked actively with Mr. SOUDER and Mr. PAYNE, along with other Members of the House, to advocate for maintaining this hallmark of equal responsibility for parents in governing Head Start.

I am also pleased that the bill strikes a balance between the House and Senate versions of program eligibility. In high-cost-of-living areas such as Chicago, low-income families can lose access to this critical child development program not due to lack of need but because we fail to adequately consider the cost of living when calculating the poverty level. The conference report grants local programs flexibility in opening the eligibility while also requiring them to demonstrate the need.

I am especially grateful that the final report includes so many issues near and dear to me, such as recruiting minority male teachers, emphasizing children's social and emotional well-being, recognizing the expanding role of grandparents and kinship caregivers in children’s lives, incorporating the best practices from the field of home visitation into the Early Head Start program, and increasing funds for salaries and education for Head Start teachers.

Finally, in addition, I am very pleased that this bipartisan bill preserves the anti-discrimination history of Head Start advocated so ardently by the Head Start and religious communities. Federal funds are not meant to support discrimination of any type, and I applaud the Members on both sides for maintaining this fundamental commitment to fairness.

This bill expands access, improves teacher quality, expands accountability, and strengthens school readiness. I am proud to be a member of the Education Committee and proud to support a Congress that will pass this bill into law.

Mr. McKEON. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 6 minutes at this time to the gentleman from Indiana, a member of the committee (Mr. SOUDER).

Mr. SOUDER. I thank our distinguished ranking member.

I am very supportive of this bill, but I want to share some vague uncomfortability with what I think is potentially happening here in Head Start, and I think it's very important to clarify for this administration and for future administrations what this bill is intended to do and not intended to do.

For the time the Republicans took over in Congress, I remember then Subcommittee Chairman Frank Riggs had a number of hearings talking about the lack of an academic focus to Head Start. There was a big debate about whether the original role was it was supposed to certainly prepare kids who didn't have the same opportunities for their ability to be prepared when they started school.

But there's a reason that Head Start, while it was in the old Department of HEW, didn't move with the Department of Education and stayed with HHS. If it was intended to be merely another education program run by educational bureaucrats run, the same way that every other education program was run, it would be over in the Department of Education. It wouldn't have been a grassroots Head Start program with parent councils that voted and participated and ran it. It would have been part of a pre-K program or a kindergarten program run by the public schools. Increasingly, we see this pressure where the public schools are trying to take over the Head Start program.

The original origins of the Head Start movement came out of the sixties. Saul Alinsky was an organizer in Chicago. The populist movement and the community action organizations led to a wave of saying, we need programs where local low-income groups are empowered to make their own decisions. What this meant many times was it didn't exactly meet the professional goals or standards of where the public schools thought it should be, necessarily where the professionals in Washington thought it should be, but they did give some level, participating in a way that we have tried to reach in kindergarten and public schools forever. We can't get
low-income parents engaged. It’s one of the biggest challenges we have. Yet in the Head Start program, they were engaged all over the country, whether it was rural low income, urban low income. And then when you talk to those parents, what’s it like when you go to school? Well, they don’t really want us at the public school. There they want us to do fundraisers or they want us to come to back-to-school night. But participating in the governance, participating in the organization was different.

Now, we had wide support in this body, 91 Members, including Mr. DAVIS, and Congresswomen LORETTA SANCHEZ and Mrs. WOOLSEY, and many conservatives on the right, who share the concept of empowerment. None of us want malfeasance in office or funding problems, people who aren’t accounting. All of us would like to have parents, you say, What’s going to take it away from these people because they’re not quite as skilled and that we don’t quite trust their judgments as much.

Now, this amendment, and with so many of them votes, they’re going to make some judgment mistakes. We need to have accountability. We need to have measurement. We need to empower those people. But this can’t be a typical take-it-were-project, because I believe that the major reason Head Start has, in fact, worked in communities across the country is it’s engaged with the people at the grassroots level. And sometimes when we use some of the language here, that’s what we’re really mean is we’re going to take it away from these people because they’re not quite as skilled and that we don’t quite trust their judgments as much.

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Mr. McKOWN, Mr. Speaker. I am happy to yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Ohio, the Republican leader, former chairman of our committee, Mr. Bohner.

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker and my colleagues, I want to thank Mr. McKown for yielding time and take a moment to congratulate Mr. MILLER and Mr. KILDEE, Mr. McKown and Mr. CASTLE, the two Republican rankers on the committee, for a job well done.

We need to reauthorize for a number of years, and I think that the work that is represented in this reauthorizaion of Head Start is very important for our Nation's children.

Those of us who have worked in the area of education for a long time know that for low-income children, having some type of early childhood development is critically important to their success. Head Start is among a number of programs, both public and private, that are out there that supply this type of early development for these children. The reforms that are included in this bill I think are critically important so that Head Start can really be all that many of us want it to be.

There are some tremendous Head Start developments that I have visited a number of them, but there are also some programs that don't fulfill the promise that we're making to parents and to their children of what this program could be.

We think we owe that to the American people what Congress can do. This is one of our better days, one of our better bills, and I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this conference report.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, again, I thank Mr. McKown, Mr. CASTLE, and all those on the other side of the aisle who have worked so hard on this bill to produce a very good bill. I also want to thank Ms. De La Salle, with Chairman MILLER, for her tireless work on this bill over the last 5 years.

Mr. Speaker, in California, Mr. KILDEE, Mr. Speaker, again, I thank Mr. McKown, Mr. CASTLE, and all those on the other side of the aisle who have worked so hard on this bill to produce a very good bill. I also want to thank Ms. De La Salle, with Chairman MILLER, for her tireless work on this bill over the last 5 years.

Mr. Speaker, America can watch this Congress at work today on this bill, Head Start, and feel good about our Congress, and that's very important. We've been working on this bill for a number of years, and I think we owe that to the American people. And we can feel a certain pride in having demonstrated to the American people what Congress can do. This is one of our better days, one of our better bills, and I'm a process that we've enjoyed. We've had differences. We resolved those differences. We produced a very good bill.

And people do make a difference. People in this Congress make a difference. And I want to especially, again, commend my friend, my colleague, Mr. McKown from California, who has worked tirelessly on this bill. This bill is better because of his input. Ms. Matsui, Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of the Improving Head Start Act of 2007 Conference Report.

In 1964, President Lyndon Johnson laid out his domestic agenda, one that made Americans reevaluate what it means to be a Great Society. We have moved from that time in our Nation's rich history: that we must all fight together for civil rights, for equality, for peace and security, against poverty, and for future generations.
Mr. Speaker, before I close, I'd like to take a minute to thank Congressman MCKEON, Chairman KILDEE, Congressman CASTLE, Chairman KENNEDY, Senator ENZI, Senator DODD, and Senator ALEXANDER for their hard work in getting us to this point. I'd also like to thank the staff for their work and expertise.

In particular, I'd like to thank Liz King and Jean Harrmann with Legislative Counsel; Lloyd Horwich with Mr. KILDEE; James Bergeron, Susan Ross, Kirsten Duncan, and Jessica Slack with Mr. McKEON and Mr. CASTLE; Roberto Rodriguez and David Johns with Senator KENNEDY; Catherine Hildum with Senator DODD; Lindsay Hunsicker and Beth Buehlman with Senator ENZI; David Cleary and Sara Rittelting with Senator ALEXANDER; and from my own staff—Lamont Ivey, Molly Carter, Kate Scully, Stephanie Moore, and Ruth Friedman.

This bill will build on Head Start’s past successes to create an even stronger program to provide Head Start children with a better future.

I am pleased that we are about to send this legislation to the President for his signature. I thank my colleagues for their efforts. Mr. EHLERS, Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the Head Start conference report and I thank Representatives MCKEON, CASTLE, MILLS, and KILDEE for producing an agreement with the Senate.

For several years, I have worked to improve Head Start’s academic and Migrant and Seasonal Head Start provisions. For thousands of children, Head Start serves as their first formal learning experience. Three- and four-year-olds are open to learning about the world around them, and they should be presented with a wide range of early academic concepts. I am very pleased that this conference agreement includes provisions to ensure that these children are exposed to math and science. I certainly do not intend for Head Start to teach “rocket science,” but rather for its teachers to equip Head Start preschoolers with the extremely basic concepts of math and science. Perhaps it will make it easier for them to go to college, and lay the foundation for them to become rocket scientists many years later.

With regard to Migrant and Seasonal Head Start, I joined with Representatives GRIJALVA, HINOJOSA and SANCHEZ in securing a 5 percent funding floor for Migrant and Seasonal Head Start in the House version of the bill. For far too long, funding for Migrant and Seasonal Head Start has lacked parity with other Head Start programs. I am disappointed that the conference report abandoned the House- and Senate-passed 5 percent floor in favor of the difficulty conferees had in finding a workable formula. I hope that Members will join me in supporting funding for Migrant and Seasonal Head Start in the future since it is a sorely needed program for workers of our fields and their children.

I urge Members to support the conference report.

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this conference report.

Let me start by commending the chairman of the subcommittee, a distinguished gentleman from Michigan, Mr. KILDEE, and the chairman of the full committee, the gentleman from California, Mr. MILLER for their work on this bill. I offer my thanks to the House and Senate conferees for bringing forth this important piece of legislation today.

In 1965, with a great deal of hard work, Head Start was created. It soon became a “legislative Lamborghini” of social programs, going from 0 to 561,000 thousand participants in the first 6 months. In the years since its inception, Head Start has become the educational foundation for more than 20 million American children.

Education serves as both a ladder of opportunity and an investment in our future. Our Nation’s security, economy, and position in the world all depend on the success of our education system. We must take advantage of this opportunity to fund our future.

Head Start and Early Head Start are linchpins in the effort to prepare our country’s most disadvantaged children to succeed in school and life. Many studies indicate that children enrolled in Head Start make significant progress in closing the readiness gap to their more advantaged peers as they enter kindergarten.

The Congressionally mandated impact study recently published its results, which noted that after less than 1 year in the program, children in Head Start had narrowed the readiness gap by 45 percent in reading skills and 28 percent in writing skills. This momentum continues well beyond the ages of 3, 4, and 5, as another large academic study has noted that Head Start graduates continue to make academic gains well after leaving the program.

The bill we see before us today helps to raise the academic standards of American children and ensures that every child in our country transcends an unequal educational opportunity and an investment in our future. Our Nation as a whole have a brighter tomorrow.

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The bill we see before us today helps to raise the academic standards of American children and ensures that every child in our country transcends an unequal educational opportunity and an investment in our future. Our Nation as a whole have a brighter tomorrow.
Today’s bill also recognizes the importance of early childhood educators, targeting new funding to improve teacher salaries and professional development. It ensures that teachers are highly qualified and able to meet the needs of children with disabilities and improves accountability for Head Start programs. Additionally, it provides funding to support the Head Start authorizing legislation necessary to continue Head Start’s success. Last week, we sent the President a bill increasing Head Start funding by 2.2 percent to simply help it keep pace with inflation. The President vetoed this funding. I encourage my colleagues to override the President’s veto to prevent Head Start program closures and ensure that children get the services they were promised.

I thank Chairman MURZ, Chairman Kildee, and the Conference Committee for putting together this bipartisan piece of legislation, and urge its passage today.

Ms. McCollum of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of the conference report on H.R. 1429, the Head Start for School Readiness Act.

As a member of the Education and Workforce Committee for 6 years, I was pleased to have the opportunity to work on this important issue. While visiting Head Start centers in the Fourth District, I was able to see firsthand the difference Head Start makes to children and families. Reserve Bank of Minneapolis published a study in 2004 showing that investment in early education has a rate of return of 12 percent. Even with all the evidence showing the social, educational, and economic value of this program, the Republican-controlled Congress was unable to pass an acceptable bill.

Thanks to the hard work of Chairman Miller and Speaker Pelosi, the bill before us today is a bipartisan, bicameral agreement that does what earlier reauthorization bills did not—it focuses on preparing children for school. This agreement increases the income eligibility to 130 percent of the poverty level so that families struggling with work and childcare will have another option. It also believes that stopping the program’s National Reporting System is essential until proper testing methods for these young children are carefully developed. H.R. 1429 also establishes a set of procedures to improve accountability in the Head Start program, which will lead to improvements for all those served by Head Start.

Earlier in the year, H.R. 1429 passed both the House and the Senate with overwhelming support. I am proud that the 110th Congress is on the verge of passing this conference report after nearly a decade of failing to reauthorize Head Start. For all the children who benefit from this program, I look forward to sending this bill to the President for his signature.

Mr. Emanuel. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the conference report for H.R. 1429, the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act. Since 1965, Head Start has provided 22 million American children with the education and health and social services to lead productive lives.

Today, we are continuing this tradition by passing strong bipartisan legislation to reauthorize this vital program. In fact, this legislation marks the first time in almost a decade that the Congress has reauthorized Head Start.

The conference report for H.R. 1429 will invest in America’s future by providing children and their teachers with the resources they need to take advantage of the opportunities that the Head Start program has offered America’s youth for over 40 years.

In addition to providing additional resources for increasing teachers’ salaries and State Advisory Councils, this reauthorization will expand the reach of both Head Start and Early Head Start by providing greater funding and flexibility. The increases in funding will enable tens of thousands of more children to access the program. H.R. 1429 will also improve Head Start by providing the Secretary of Health and Human Services and local teams...
Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to support the Conference Report on H.R. 1429, the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007. This bipartisan legislation takes significant steps to strengthen the Head Start program so that children will be better prepared and ready to succeed when they begin kindergarten. H.R. 1429 increases funds for improving early childhood education and provides additional support for the program’s extensive monitoring process and the comprehensive services offered to the students’ families. In addition, it expands access to Head Start for more children, increases coordination between State and local programs, and eliminates any further development of the controversial and ineffective National Reporting System.

For over 40 years, the Head Start program has worked to break the cycle of poverty by providing quality early childhood education for low-income children and families. In the House budget for FY 2008, the State of Texas is estimated to receive approximately $490 million in Head Start funding which will go towards providing services for over 68,000 students. Since it first began in 1965, the program has served more than 20 million children, and it continues to play a major role in our Nation’s efforts to close the achievement gap, reduce poverty, and ensure that all Americans have the opportunity to succeed.

Studies show that students with a high quality pre-Kindergarten education enjoy greater success in academics as well as their overall lives. The Head Start program goes a long way in addressing educational inequity by aiding low income children in their social and cognitive development. I am a firm supporter of this program and the lifelong benefits it provides. It is only by addressing this critical need that we will be able to ensure a better future for all our Nation’s children.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, Head Start has been the premier early childhood education program in the United States since 1965. Since that time, it has benefited 20 million children and families and has become one of the cornerstones of this country’s efforts to close the achievement gap, combat poverty, and provide all Americans with the opportunity to thrive. By passing the conference report to H.R. 1429, the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007, we will reinvigorate Head Start and help more children arrive at kindergarten ready to succeed.

The fact that quality education and early engagement, from both parents and teachers, are essential for our kids’ success. Recent findings from the congressionally mandated impact study found that after less than 1 year, Head Start narrowed the achievement gap by 45 percent in pre-reading skills and 28 percent in prewriting skills. Another large study found that Head Start graduates continue to gain ground after they leave the program. Furthermore, Head Start graduates are less likely to repeat a grade, need to be left back a grade or to get into trouble with the law. They are more likely to go on to college and to have professional careers.

This bipartisan reauthorization improves teacher and classroom quality, strengthens Head Start, expands access to Head Start for more children, ensures that centers are well-run, boosts coordination between Head Start and State and local programs, and improves comprehensive services that help children by helping their families.

I commend and thank Congressmen KILDEE, and Chairman MILLER for their leadership on this critical legislation. Head Start has proven its self as a strong and effective program. The growth and success of millions of America children and families is living proof.

We have a responsibility to embrace their success, support it, and strengthen it for years to come. I know that my colleagues will join me in sending this critical reauthorization to ensure the Head Start program meets its full potential.

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Mr. Speaker, for the former State superintendent of schools serving in Congress, I have devoted my life to the well-being and development of children, and I strongly support Head Start. I rise in support of H.R. 1429, the Head Start for School Readiness Act.

In the global economy of the 21st century, lifelong learning is the pathway to the American Dream, and for many of our Nation’s children, learning begins with Head Start. Over 20,000 children in North Carolina get prepared for school in Head Start or Early Head Start. This act takes and builds on the success of Head Start, expanding and enhancing this fundamental initiative that has served over 20 million children and families nationwide since 1965. H.R. 1429 extends the benefits of Head Start to more of our Nation’s low-income children, and raises the bar so that we can attract highly qualified Head Start providers through performance accountable, greater compensation, and higher standards.

Research continues to show that the first few years of a child’s life are critical to a child’s mental development: their brains grow exponentially and learning patterns are set. We must invest in these youngsters so that they may take full advantage of one of the premier education systems in the world by ensuring their school-readiness by age 5. Head Start successfully provides the stepping stones to lifelong learning.

This act provides the parents and children of our country an additional 4 years of this vital service, guaranteeing a 20 percent increase in funding by 2012. Education is the best investment we can make for our children, grandchildren, country, and world.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 1429 updates, improves, and expands the successful services of Head Start. I commend Chairman MILLER for his leadership on this bipartisan legislation, and I urge my colleagues to join me in voting to pass it.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question was taken; and the Yeas and Nays were ordered.

The Yeas and Nays were ordered.
NOT VOTING—15

Boustany, Jeffery
Brown (CT), Christopher
Butler (SC), Tim
Culkin, Stephen
Cuban, Dennis
Davis, Pat
Diaz-Balart, Martinez

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WELLS) announced that the vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 415, nays 2, not voting 15, as follows:

Yeas—415

Akin
Barrett (SC)
Broun (GA)
Burton (IN)
Campbell (CA)
Coble
Colburn
Doolittle
Donnelly
Flake
Flake, George
Frank, Frank (AZ)
Frank, Jason (KY)
Greene
Hensarling
Herger
Herseth Sandlin
Hill
Hinchen
Hirano
Holton
Hoskins
Houck
Hotten
Honda
Hooyer
Hoyt
Hulshof
Hunter
Incana
Israel
Jackson (IL)
Jackson-Lee (TX)
Jefferson
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (IL)
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
Jones (NY)
Jones (OH)
Jordan
Kagan
Kanjiefski
Kapoor
Keller
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilpatrick
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kirk
Klein (FL)
Kline (MN)
Kosciusko
Kucinich
Kuhl (NY)
Lamb (CA)
Lamborn
Lampson
Lantos
Laxalt
Leach
Leavitt
Levin
Lewis (GA)
Lewis (KY)
Linder
Lipscomb
Loebach
Loebenstein, Steve
Loebsack
LoBiondo
Linder

Drake
Duncan
Edwards
Ellison
Ellsworth
Emerson
Engel
Epshoff
Farr
Feeney
Ferguson
Ferlat
Finn
Fowlkes
Frank (AZ)
Frank (MA)
Frelinghuysen
Gallegly
Garrett (NJ)
Garrett
Gehrke
Giffords
Gillibrand
Gingrey
Gingrey
Gosnell
Griffin
Green
Greene
Grijalva


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