

member of Philadelphia's Top Ten Most Influential African-Americans. I am honored to have the opportunity to recognize him today.

CONGRATULATING STAFF AND
FACULTY OF INGLEMOOR HIGH
BEING AWARDED THE BLUE RIB-
BON AWARD

HON. JAY INSLEE

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 15, 2007

Mr. INSLEE. Madam Speaker, this week, I was honored in my D.C. office by a visit from hard-working faculty and teachers from the Northshore School District. The U.S. Department of Education has awarded Inglemoor High School with the prestigious Blue Ribbon Award. Principal Vicki Sherwood led the school to this merit by ensuring that students had a high, consistent performance in reading and math.

Inglemoor has been successful in providing a range of educational programs to fit a variety of students' needs. From offering rigorous international curriculum to delivering educational services for students with special needs, the staff is willing to provide creative educational support.

I grew up in a family of educators where my father and four members of my immediate family were teachers. My son followed their footsteps and earned his teaching degree. As a parent, I know what it is like to seek for your kids the best education possible and this passion inspired my public service. It takes a great deal of commitment to provide a quality education. Let us today honor the staff and faculty of the Northshore School District and applaud them because reaching the Blue Ribbon-level of achievement is no easy task.

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

SPEECH OF

HON. RUSH D. HOLT

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 14, 2007

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the conference report for H.R. 1429, the Improving Head Start Act, and I am proud to be a cosponsor of H.R. 1429. I would like to thank Chairman MILLER for producing a bipartisan product of high quality. For almost 40 years, Head Start has assisted low-income preschool children and their families, establishing a comprehensive early-learning environment and addressing a variety of social and medical needs. The program has provided services to over 20 million children and their families since its inception in 1965. Currently, over 900,000 children are enrolled in almost 2,600 local Head Start programs. Children with disabilities make up 10 percent of Head Start Children. However, less than 50 percent of eligible preschoolers are served by Head Start and 2 percent of eligible infants and toddlers are served in Early Head Start.

In my district, Head Start has been a tremendous success, with over 1,000 children enrolled in 18 programs. The majority of these children, about three-quarters, are from families with incomes below the Federal poverty line.

Head Start's comprehensive medical and social services provide important benefits to these children. In my central New Jersey district, 91 percent of Head Start children have received basic primary health care and 84 percent have a continuous, accessible source of dental care. The program has also provided mental health services to over 200 children

and assisted almost 150 children with disabilities.

Today's bill provides greater flexibility to serve children whose family income is just above the Federal poverty line, up to 130 percent of the poverty line, while ensuring that serving the neediest children remains the program's top priority.

The conference report authorizes total funding of \$7.99 billion for fiscal year 2010 allowing tens of thousands more children access to the program. This bill addresses a number of problems that have been identified. For example, the bill prioritizes expansion for Early Head Start, which serves children from birth to age 3, so more children can receive Head Start during the critical development years when their brains are growing the fastest. The conference report ensures more participation of homeless children by removing barriers to their enrollment. The bill enhances opportunities for children with disabilities to participate in Head Start programs.

I am also pleased to report that the bill continues to improve the already improving Head Start teacher qualifications. The bill increases teacher qualifications so that 50 percent of teachers nationwide must have a BA in early childhood education or a related field by 2013.

Mr. Speaker, I have seen the effects of Head Start in my district. Children in Head Start in my district are more likely to receive necessary medical services than other low-income children. They are nearly three times as likely as other low-income children to receive basic medical care and six times as likely to receive dental care. This bill will allow these benefits to be expanded and improved. I ask my colleagues to vote for this important legislation.