

## PRESIDENT BUSH SIGNS HEAD START INTO LAW -- DECEMBER 12, 2007

Washington, DC -- Delaware Congressman Mike Castle, Senior Republican of the House Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education, joined President Bush, along with other Members of Congress today, in a ceremony to sign the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act into law.

The Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act aims to improve and reauthorize the Head Start program, a program within the Department of Health and Human Services which provides low-income children access to educational, health, nutritional, social, and other services. Rep. Castle, an author of the legislation, welcomed passage of this legislation which he, along with Members of the House Education and Labor Committee, as well as Members of the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee, have worked to reauthorize over the last several Congresses.

"Head Start is a program which lives up to its name," said Rep. Castle. "With the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act, we are building upon the already successful Head Start program by increasing the focus on academic development, reinforcing program integrity, and improving the coordination between Head Start and state and local early childhood programs.

"I am pleased with the passage of this legislation, which bolsters Head Start and allows it to better serve over 900,000 children, parents, and neighborhoods around the nation."

Rep. Castle recently witnessed the success of the program first-hand through visits to Head Start Centers throughout Delaware, including the Bear Head Start Center, the Colonial Gardens Head Start Center in Dover, and the Stockley Center's Head Start and Early Head Start programs in Georgetown.

Specifically, the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act will:

Strengthen Head Start's Academic Components by:

- &bull; Emphasizing "what works" in preparing disadvantaged children for school;
- &bull; Improving Head Start teacher quality;
- &bull; Strengthening academic quality standards;
- &bull; Ensuring that early childhood education programs are based on scientifically-valid research; and
- &bull; Requiring no new testing.

Improving Fiscal and Program Management by:

- &bull; Creating more competition in the Head Start system;
- &bull; Seeking better safeguards against financial abuse;
- &bull; Limiting excessive salaries and perks, as proposed by Republicans during a motion to instruct negotiators on the final legislation; and

• Improving program disclosure and transparency.

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