



FIRST FOCUS

CAMPAIGN FOR CHILDREN

March 27, 2017

The Honorable Joaquin Castro
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Castro:

I am writing on behalf of First Focus Campaign for Children, a bipartisan children's advocacy organization dedicated to making children and families the priority in federal budget and policy decisions, to thank you for your leadership in introducing the Pre-K Teacher Parity Act (H.R. 1013).

As an organization that is committed to supporting early childhood education programs we applaud your efforts to recognize the sacrifice of Head Start and Pre-K teachers in congruence with their K-12 colleagues. Research has shown that the early years of childhood are a critical period for learning and development.

Each year teachers from across the nation put their student's educational needs first, and because of budget restraints this often requires expenses from their own pockets. Teachers in early childhood education classrooms/programs are not exempt from these restraints. They too are confronted with the challenge of providing the best for their students with the minimum amount of resources.

Currently, Head Start and Pre-Kindergarten teachers are excluded from the Educator Expense tax deduction. This is unfortunate not only for their students, but according to a [recent report](#) by the U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, early learning caregivers and teachers with a Bachelor's degree earn nearly half the average earnings of individuals with a Bachelor's Degree overall.

The Pre-K Teacher Parity Act would expand the Educator Expense Deduction to allow early childhood instructors to deduct up to \$250 for teaching expenses. This additional resource would be beneficial for both the teachers and the students of early childhood programs. By recognizing Head Start and Pre-Kindergarten teachers with their K-12 colleagues, the Pre-K Teacher Parity Act would acknowledge the value of early educators for our nation's children.

We are grateful for your leadership in making children and families a legislative priority, and we look forward to working with you on this and other proposals to improve the well-being of America's children and youth.

Sincerely,