

November 13, 2013

Congressman Richard Hanna
319 Cannon House Office Building
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Hanna,

On behalf of First Focus Campaign for Children (FFCC), a bipartisan organization advocating for legislative change in Congress to ensure children and families are a priority in federal policy and budget decisions, I would like to express our strong support for The Strong Start for America's Children Act. We thank you for introducing this important piece of legislation to increase children's access to high-quality early childhood education experiences, and look forward to working with you on this bill.

As you know, it is important for young children to attend high quality early education. It contributes to their healthy social and emotional development, keeps children in safe, engaging environments while their parents are at work or school, and helps ensure that children are ready to learn when they enter kindergarten. Additionally, the short- and long-term positive outcomes of preschool are well documented. Studies find that preschool: improves early reading and math skills, leads to higher high school graduation rates, more school attainment, higher earnings as adults, better health, less criminal behavior and fewer teen pregnancies, and a positive return on investment between \$3 and \$7 for every \$1 invested in preschool.

Yet high-quality preschool is not available to every child who would benefit from it. The high cost of private preschool and limited availability of public initiatives means that children from low- and middle-income families are often left out. In addition to unfairly putting children at inequitable starting points, this strains our public education system by making K-12 education more about helping kids that are behind catch up rather than pursuing academic excellence.

The Strong Start for America's Children Act would make great strides toward ensuring that every child can access high-quality pre-K using a state-federal partnership that allows states to develop high-quality pre-K systems that give children the most educational benefit. Additionally, the legislation recognizes the linkages between pre-K and early care and education for infants and toddlers. With center-based child care costing more than public college tuition in many states, parents often face difficult choices while at school or at work. To address this, the bill creates partnerships between Early Head Start centers and child care providers serving children through age three. This proposal will improve the quality and affordability of child care while increasing dependability for participating children.

Thank you for introducing The Strong Start for America's Children Act, which will help America build a successful 21st century education system on the solid foundation provided by high-quality early childhood education for every child. We look forward to working with you on this legislation.

Sincerely,



Bruce Lesley
President, FFCC