



March 2, 2009

Dear Senator:

The undersigned national, state and local organizations urge you to *co-sponsor* S. 244, the bi-partisan Education Begins at Home Act (EBAH). This legislation, recently reintroduced for the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress would establish the first dedicated federal funding stream solely for quality, voluntary home visiting programs for parents with young children. The potential supports provided through EBAH allow for a sound investment in our families and communities across the country.

Continued research has documented the positive impact that quality home visitation programs provide for children and families, including: greater school readiness, enhanced child health and development, improved parenting practices, and reduction in child maltreatment and later criminality. Voluntary in nature, these programs provide critical child development information, support and guidance so parents can help their children reach their full potential.

Recently reintroduced by Senators Kit Bond, Patty Murray and then-Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton, EBAH continues the development of a comprehensive early-childhood platform for states and communities. The support provided through this legislation builds upon existing proven home visiting models across the country, while also providing for specific outreach to military families with young children and those who are English language learners. Additionally, the legislation allows the establishment of a parent and public education and awareness campaign for the safe care of infants and young children. Together, the grants would make available \$500 million spread over three years for states to expand and implement proven home visitation programs that begin to address the unmet demand for services.

Home visitation is an effective, research-based and cost-efficient way to ensure that all children have the opportunity to grow up healthy, safe, ready to learn and able to become productive members of society. Investing in this research-proven approach now will mean savings down the road in costs associated with health, education, child maltreatment and criminal justice. We urge you to [*co-sponsor the bill / to take steps to move EBAH out of your committee/subcommittee*] and ensure its enactment so that this important legislation can begin improving the lives of children and families.

Respectfully,