



# Head Start: What's Next?

AZHSA General Membership Meeting  
February 20, 2025

# NHSA's Vision

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## To Lead

To be the untiring voice that will not be quiet until every vulnerable child is served with the Head Start model of support for the whole child, the family, and the community.

## To Advocate

To work diligently for policy changes that ensure all vulnerable children and families have what they need to succeed.

# NHSA's Mission

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**To coalesce, inspire, and support the Head Start field as a leader in early childhood development and education.**

**We are  
compelled to  
fulfill this  
mission by the  
promise of all  
possible  
outcomes:**

- One powerful, united Head Start voice
- A collegial, collaborative Head Start field
- Nonpartisan support of an increased federal commitment to Head Start
- Healthier, empowered children and families, and stronger, more vibrant communities

# Part 1:

# What We Know

# The White House

- Hit the ground sprinting & with momentum
- It's not the same movement as 2016
- Key Members of Trump Team
  - HHS Secretary RFK, Jr.
  - OMB Director Russell Vought
  - Education Secretary Linda McMahon (*nominee*)
- Notes about the Trump Administration
  - Project 2025 playbook is being implemented
  - Should be taken seriously, but how much literally?
  - OMB leadership & DOGE might have their sights on Head Start



# U.S. Senate

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- 53-47 GOP Majority
  - Sens. Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) and Susan Collins (R-ME), both Head Start supporters, will be important swing votes
- Sen. Collins heads the Approps Committee, which is still likely to be among the most bi-partisan Senate committees
- HELP committee chair, Sen. Bill Cassidy (R-LA), is also a Head Start supporter

# U.S. House of Representatives

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- Republican majority is extremely narrow
  - 218-215 GOP majority, with two vacancies
- New Education and Workforce Committee Chair, Rep. Tim Walberg (R-MI-05), has a mixed record on Head Start
  - Rep. Raul Grijalva (D-AZ-07) serves on the Committee
- Appropriations Committee leadership still Head Start supporters
  - Rep. Juan Ciscomani (R-AZ-06) is an appropriator and outspoken supporter of Head Start

# Part 2: The Threats



# Threats to Head Start

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- Overturning the Head Start final rule through the Congressional Review Act
- DOGE
- Congressional budget resolution / President's FY26 budget / FY25 & FY26 Appropriations
- Block Granting
- Impact of immigration enforcement changes and related issues, including public charge

# Part 3: Our Strategy

# Our *(Current)* Strategy

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- Aggressive FY26 appropriations effort
  - Submitting as many requests as we can
- Level-up with every Congressional office
  - Opposition to Neutrality to Understanding to Excitement to Action
  - Grassroots engagement through GO Team
- “Small Bill” Strategy
  - Bills with no budgetary impact to get more GOP support
- Strategy will be tweaked as we see direction of the GOP
  - Likely heavy economic argument
  - Need to proactively address child health and safety issue

# GO Team



**Goal:** Build Congressional support and awareness by creating & empowering local-level advocacy through program visits, local press engagement and social media campaigns.

**Objective:** Campaigns for each Member highlighting Head Start's local impact on children, families, and communities, as well as consequences of reduced support. Focus on keeping Head Start in MoCs' social media feeds, local press, and community activities.

# Encourage Members to Visit

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- Congress will be in recess the following weeks:
  - March 17-21
  - April 14-18 & 21-25 (*weeks before & after Easter*)
  - May 27-30 (*week of Memorial Day*)
- Submit invitations to visit to both the Washington and local offices as soon as possible (*NHSA can help!*)



# Key Message Points

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- Head Start programs reach 750,000 children whose families face significant economic and social hardships
- Each Head Start program is designed, controlled, and operated by local community grant recipients (programs).
- Beyond the classroom, Head Start ensures children have access to comprehensive healthcare and mental health services that reduce long-term costs for families and alleviate pressure on the healthcare system.

# Key Message Points

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- Head Start supports parents so they can provide for their families and contribute to the workforce
- Head Start focuses on strengthening families
- Head Start fills a significant gap for rural families and communities
- Strong return on investment
- Significant cost savings for families

# Part 4:

# FY25 & What You Can Do



# What's Up With FY25 Appropriations?

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- The Senate FY25 bill would provide an additional \$700 million in Head Start funding:
  - \$544 million for a COLA of approximately 4.4%
  - \$125 million in additional QIF funds
  - \$10 million for the Tribal Colleges and Universities–Head Start Partnership Program
- The House bill has just \$25 million more for Head Start, so programs & staff would actually be losing money due to inflation
- Still waiting for an agreement on “top lines”
- So, we need you to...

# Take Action Now!

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## Urge Your Members of Congress to Support Increased Funding for Head Start!

- Take 1 minute right now to send your emails.
- Take 5 minutes later to encourage those on your email list & your social media followers to do the same.



**[nhsa.org/take-action](https://nhsa.org/take-action)**

# Thank You!

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**Bob Bissen**

Senior Director  
of Government Affairs

[bbissen@nhsa.org](mailto:bbissen@nhsa.org)

202-438-0737

