

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1903

July 22, 2004

The Honorable Arien Specter
Chairman
Labor, Health and Human Services,
and Education Appropriations Subcommittee
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Harkin
Ranking Member
Labor, Health and Human Services
and Education Appropriations Subcommittee
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Specter and Ranking Member Harkin:

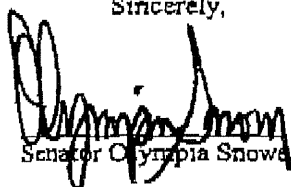
We are writing to urge you to support ending the cycle of poverty by funding the William F. Goodling Even Start Family Literacy Program at \$250 million.

As you know, William F. Goodling Even Start Family Literacy Program helps break the cycle of poverty by improving the educational opportunities of the nation's lowest-income families. This program has been very successful in the past because early childhood education, adult literacy or adult basic education, and parenting education are unified into a single family literacy program. This comprehensive one-stop family literacy program is like no other.

Research shows that families participating in William F. Goodling Even Start Family Literacy Program make consistent statistically significant gains on virtually all measured literacy outcomes. This program achieves significant outcomes while serving a unique and extremely disadvantaged population because instructional activities are based on scientifically-based research. In 2004 the U.S. Department of Education states that, "No Other Education Program Serves a Comparable Population." For example, Even Start families are significantly poorer than Head Start families. In 1997, 41 percent of Even Start families had an annual household income under \$6,000, compared with 13 percent of Head Start families. In the 2000-2001 program year 84 percent of Even Start participants were at or below the Federal poverty level.

This \$250 million request represents the first steps toward empowering 50,000 American families to gain literacy skills, build strong families, earn a living wage, and move toward self-sufficiency. We believe this investment is justified because of the strong experimental research results that indicate families achieve strong and consistent literacy results each year. We urge you to continue empowering America's families with programs that have "proven track records of success." Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,


Senator Olympia Snowe


Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton


Senator Susan Collins

Patty Murray
Chris Damm

Blanche L. Linde

Rethie Stetson

Cal Henny

C. I. Chue

Harry Reid

Jack Reed

Jim Jeffords

Dianne Feinstein

Phil Wy

Dir. John

Jim Duthie

Mike DeWine