

**HEAD START'S FUTURE:  
Perspectives from the Bush Administration,  
Congress, States, Advocates and Researchers**



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**PANEL ONE:**

**Overview of Administration Plan and Reaction from Capitol Hill**

**MARGARET SPELLINGS**

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**REPRESENTATIVE MICHAEL N. CASTLE (R-DE)**

**REPRESENTATIVE GEORGE MILLER (D-CA)**



**MR. STROBE TALBOTT:** Good morning to all of you and welcome to the Brookings Institution. I'm Strobe Talbott, the President of the Brookings Institution. I'm very grateful to all of you for turning out on what looks like it's going to be, at least for the first half of the day, a nice spring day for an extremely timely and important discussion of one of the more vital issues that our nation faces.

I want to welcome you here on behalf of Ron Haskins and my other colleagues here at Brookings. The only note of regret that I want to strike here at the outset is that Ron's and my colleague, Belle Sawhill, could not be with us today. She has a family situation that came up at the last minute and that requires her to be out on the West Coast, but she sends greetings to many of you here including on the panel whom she knows very well. I know that Ron will be giving her a full report later on on what will be the proceedings of the day.

Head Start has been around for about 40 years. It's helped over 21 million poor and minority children in our country get access to proper schooling in our public school system. It has cost the nation a great deal of money over those years, nearly \$66 billion. Most people who are expert in this program, and there are quite a few who are here today, believe that Head Start has certainly had a significant degree of success in preparing poor children for public school.

Now that said, there is obviously plenty to be done in the future. Children from poor and minority families are still substantially behind their more fortunate peers in the school system and the experience of education itself has tended, if anything, to widen the gap.

One reason, of course, that this discussion today is so timely is that Head Start is up for reauthorization and the inevitable and healthy debate over reauthorization has been enlivened by President Bush's proposal to give states the option of taking over Head Start if they agree to conditions about maintaining spending and quality.

The President's proposal is, of course, generating some controversy. It's received a lot of press attention. The subject of Head Start was featured on the editorial page of the *Washington Post* I noticed over the weekend.

In any event, there's no question that the President's proposal, and depending on what happens to it, could dramatically change the Head Start program and indeed have a real impact on the entire field of pre-school education, so there is a lot for all of us to talk about.

I think we're very fortunate to have a highly qualified and spirited group of policymakers, program experts and researchers here today.

The first panel is made up of three people who will be among the most influential in deciding the fate of Head Start this year. The panel is going to be moderated by my friend and colleague Ron Haskins who knows this subject so well from a number of different vantage points.

I want to thank in particular Margaret Spellings for being here today. She is the head of President Bush's Domestic Policy Council and in that capacity she sort of kind of admitted to having been Ron Haskins' boss, although she quickly added that Ron Haskins doesn't take bossing around very easily. I can certainly testify to that. [Laughter]

We're also very glad to have with us this morning Representative Mike Castle of Delaware who chairs the subcommittee of the House Education and Workforce Committee that deals with Head Start. And also Representative George Miller of California who is the ranking Democrat on that committee.

Without further ado I'm going to turn this meeting and this panel over to Ron who will act as the MC and moderator.

Once again, thanks to all of you for being with us. Ron, over to you.

**PANEL ONE: Overview of Administration Plan and Reaction from Capitol Hill**



**MR. RON HASKINS:** Thank you, Strobe. I will be very brief.

Margaret Spellings. Margaret is going to tell us about the Bush proposal.

**MS. SPELLINGS:** When I walked in I saw some folks with some "Save HeadStart.Org" buttons and I guess I want one of those too, because contrary to popular belief, or any belief, there is no effort afoot to destroy, undermine, weaken or in otherwise hurt Head Start. So if somebody will save me a button I'd be thrilled about that.



I want to talk a little bit about, by way of background, the President and Mrs. Bush's involvement in early childhood education, to sort of talk about their bonafides, and then spend a few minutes talking about the President's proposal which has generated a lot of interest as this town has been famous for.

I'd first like to say that as Governor, then-Governor Bush was responsible for urging the first-ever state commitment to Head Start in the way of state dollars for Head Start in Texas. We have had a long-time commitment to early childhood development and had pretty significant investments in school-based pre-K programs and standards, a strong focus on reading and so forth. So I just want to say that he and Mrs. Bush are very strong believers in early childhood development and in Head Start. So that's just to set the table there.

Last April of '02, we convened a [program] called Good Start, Grow Smart, with some of the folks in this room, and we heard from tacticians from around the country about several things that were going on out there, and we continued to hear them over and over which precipitated the development of this policy that's before us now.

What we heard from states primarily, and I'll just tell you my bias is, as a state person, and we're good federalists in the Bush Administration mostly, and we do have a lot of confidence

in the states and that certainly has applied to the No Child Left Behind and some of the things that have been going on up here. But what we heard from --

[Fixing microphone]

Sorry about that. Probably you heard enough of that to get the gist. I want a "HeadStart.Org" button, that's the main thing I said. [Laughter]

Anyway, what we heard from folks around the country was this lack of coordination and consistency between various early childhood programs. We had a very significant federal investment to Head Start with significant numbers of kids who were deemed to be at risk and the neediest kids, the children that needed most of the serious intervention and so forth with respect to school readiness. We had states investing in early childhood development and pre-K programs. We had day care. We had a series of silos and very little ability to communicate or coordinate across those lines. Sure, these are all people of goodwill, and things like that sporadically went on in communities but really no systematic or systemic way to leverage resources and to coordinate services across those various jurisdictions and efforts, all of which are focused on making sure that kids are emotionally, nutritionally, socially, and cognitively ready to be successful in school. That's my first point I want to make.

There is nothing about the President's proposal that would undermine any of the important aspects in Head Start that have been so integral to it such as the social, emotional parent involvement, nutritional, immunization. In fact quite the contrary. In the President's proposal it talks about the need to maintain at least the level of services that Head Start currently offers in that regard. So I just want to put that on the table.

In any event, we heard from states and communities, Governors, school people, Head Start folks from around the country that we needed to figure out a better way at the federal level to coordinate this on the eve of the reauthorization. So that's what we've tried to do in the policy that the President has unveiled. Let me describe that quickly, and we'll move on.

What the President has offered up is the opportunity for states either on behalf of their entire state or a region or just a particular school district or community or county, to submit a plan jointly to the Secretaries of Health and Human Services and Education that would describe how they, the state, would become more active players in the early childhood arena including Head Start.

One of the things that we have passed in No Child Left Behind and we're very serious with states about, and I think that's been indicated in the implementation of that legislation is that we're going to hold schools accountable for reading achievement by the end of the third grade. We're going to have strong accountability measures and strong accountability for states, and

they're going to be at risk of losing federal funds, and so forth. So it's a little disingenuous of us at the federal level to say meet these standards with kids reading on grade level, and then say but hands off, no involvement, with a very key and critical part of that population. So we thought we ought to be true to our overall goals of having accountability and authority aligned and give states more authority with respect to early childhood development programs.

So a state can develop a plan, submit it jointly to these Secretaries, under certain conditions. They have to maintain, they have to serve the Head Start eligible population at least to the level that they're currently being served. They have to stipulate an accountability system so they can measure progress across these various programs. They have to meet a maintenance of effort requirement that includes the level of investment that they currently have, and in some states that's hundreds of millions of dollars and so forth, so this is not a way to take Head Start resources and build roads. They must commit to the current level of services that they're already offering. They have to develop a standard for pre-K programs, they have to have standards, professional development and accountability measures that attach to those things so that there's more cohesion, comprehensiveness between various Head Start programs and school-based and pre-K and child care programs. And they have to prove that up to both the Secretaries of Health and Human Services and Education.

If they do that to the satisfaction of those two Secretaries, they would have more latitude with respect to coordinating resources and programs around early childhood development.

So that's it in a nutshell. We are certainly open to other ideas that might foster better coordination and communication and results for kids, because this is not just about adults sitting around a table. This is about better preparing kids to be successful in school.

So I look forward to your questions, and Ron, I'll turn it back to you.

**MR. HASKINS:** Mr. Miller?



**MR. GEORGE MILLER:** Thank you.

Let me begin by saying I think in my role as a policymaker and in consideration of the reauthorization of Head Start, you sort of have to put it in some context. You have to ask this proposal that's just been outlined by Margaret, what is the purpose? And what is the likelihood that this would achieve the improvement of Head Start, the improvement of the experience for these children, and the improvement of their ability to be school ready, ready to learn, and to be able to socially interact with other children.

I have to tell you that I think this comes at a time when there's a huge credibility gap in this proposal. The idea that we're going to take this program and we're going to turn it over to a number of states on a voluntary basis, whatever number we decide. They can come forward and we'll block grant the program, and as long as they serve the same number of children and require the same services, not the same quality of services, not the same quality of program attendant to these children, that therefore they'll be able to do what they want to do.

That comes in the context of one, that the states haven't done very much as it is. They really haven't embraced the idea. We keep talking about pre-K, we keep talking about universal programs, but the fact is the states really haven't stepped up. There are some bright spots, there always are in all of these situations, but they really haven't done much on quality, they haven't done much on professional standards, and we know after years and years of study that those are linked to the outcomes that we have achieved in Head Start.

I find this simply another in the long litany of ideas where the questions about the program are answered with a block grant and that's the answer. That's true in foster care, that's true in housing, it's true in much of education, and it's true of Medicaid. That somehow you just give a block grant and the Governors will all do the same as we are doing at the federal level with respect to the services and the quality. But the evidence is that's not the case in each and every one of these efforts.

In each and every one of these efforts, again going back to the context and the timing, the states are cutting these very programs. They're cutting their housing programs, they're cutting their education programs, they're cutting their foster care programs, they're cutting the child care programs almost in every state. The results are sort of rolling in here.

So now that the states have come to Washington and asked for help and were told no by the Administration, they were told absolutely no, because helping the states at this particular moment is inconsistent with the first priority which is the tax cut. You can't hand out \$50 billion or \$75 billion or whatever to help the states with their current problems and still continue to do the tax cut and deal with the deficits and all those other problems.

So in this atmosphere of turmoil and this atmosphere of dark clouds with the states, we're suggesting to them that we're going to hand them this program and they're going to maintain the quality and expand it and coordinate it.

Now there's no question there's a coordination problem. I hear it in the counties that I represent, I hear it in the state that I represent, I've heard it from other places. The answer is that we're going to take Head Start and use it as battering ram because the states haven't figured out how to coordinate their program? I just don't understand how that leads anybody to believe that that's going to provide for an improvement in the experience and the quality of the Head Start

program. I just don't get it.

We're going to have more children with no guarantee of more money, with the only guarantee of the same money, and somehow we're going to have a better outcome. That's coming from the same people that say that they're not happy with the outcome we have today, but it's going to get better. No, it's going to get diluted is what's going to happen in that situation.

So I have a great deal of problem suggesting if you did want to do this, whether or not this is, the timing is correct.

I understand that the President has appreciated, he said it once in his first and only visit to the Democratic Caucus at our retreat, that all money is fungible and that's what's going on here. All money is fungible. And I'm very concerned about that proposition.

But the fact is, if the question is coordination, if the question is bringing programs together, we obviously have states, Georgia I think and North Carolina, that have improved their programs under existing law, provided coordination, dramatically improved the resources available to their children, and we hope we'll get some of those outcomes.

What we really should be discussing, certainly in this economic atmosphere where the states are really incapable of dealing with this program in the manner suggested by the White House, what we really should be doing is asking the hard questions again about Head Start. About are we satisfied with these results? Are these children in fact really ready to learn? What can we do to improve that? We should be asking those questions about quality, about program improvement, about resources, and again about these children and the condition in which these children come to the Head Start program and the condition in which they leave it. Because the fact of the matter is, I appreciate what the states have done, I appreciate what we've done in other child care programs. But the fact of the matter is, these children do better than those children in that program. Not by a great margin, but they're doing better. We ought not to threaten that progress. We ought to build on that program.

I have serious questions to be raised about this program. I find too often we talk about the environment of the program when we really don't talk about the outcomes. I'd like us to talk more about those outcomes. But I don't think suggesting giving that to states that are in this kind of financial trouble, that this is what we ought to be doing.

Let the states step up to the plate. They can coordinate their programs. They just don't want to go through the political problem of doing it. And to suggest that that will happen when they just simply have another program, they have no additional resources under this plan, they don't get to plow in any additional money to their programs to bring them up to these standards or to improve their quality, I just think it's a non-starter. I think it's bad timing. I think it's a bad



program. And I think it's going to have a very very bad result, and I think it defies the history of this program which these children are in fact doing better. They're doing better than their siblings that didn't go to the program. They're doing better than children who go to other child care programs. And they're doing better than children that don't get the child care programs.

Are they doing as well as they can? Are we getting all out of it? That's the question that we ought to be asking. That's what this reauthorization ought to be about. To suggest that somehow we've met the demand for this program and we've met the quality assurances for this program is just false. And to suggest that somehow that can be done by putting a lot more children into some kind of coordinated program without the additional resources just doesn't make sense, and I don't think it's an accurate portrayal of the result.

When we were taking the victory lap on No Child Left Behind, at one point Senator Kennedy and myself and the President and John Boehner, he called us into the office on the airplane and he said what do you think we can now do about early childhood education? What kinds of things can we think about?

This is really inconsistent. We said to the states Leave No Child Behind, and we gave them additional money, and we said and we outlined a federally mandated program for continuous improvement for annual yearly progress, for standards and assessments and additional money and to quality. Here we're simply saying here, run this program. Get it coordinated.

Coordinated with what? With a whole host in many many states of low quality programs? I don't think that's what these children deserve. I think they deserve much better than that.

Thank you.

**MR. HASKINS:** We can only hope that during the question and answer period that Mr. Miller will tell us what he really thinks about the President's proposal. [Laughter]

Mr. Castle?



**MR. MICHAEL N. CASTLE:** Thank you, Ron. I'm sorry that Margaret stole your thunder when she said that this makes her feel like Oprah. I was thinking about you as being Oprah as we started this program. [Laughter]

We're here today really to talk about a program that probably all of us in this room agree is a wonderful program that's helped a lot of children in this country and is helping some 900,000 children as we speak with respect to getting ready for their more formal education. I don't think there's any doubt about that. I

think if you took a poll you would find this is as popular as any program there is out there.

I think the goal is the same for all of us, although we're probably the most interested people in the country -- can you hear me in rear, by the way? But this is probably the most popular program in the country for not just young children but in general. But in reality, there are areas to which I think we could improve and hopefully that's why we are here. Not to fight over just the differences, but try to meld them together and come up with what's important in terms of the future.

I would just like to say as a moderate Republican, I find myself sort of between some of the things Margaret says and some of things that George says, but I would like to just point out some of the things that have happened in education in recent years.

It's been about 20 years since the Nation At Risk came out. I've watched education since that time from the position of being a Lieutenant Governor and a Governor and a Member of the House of Representatives, and I can't tell you that I'm really that impressed that we're doing that much better in education today than we were 20 or 25 years ago, and that bothers me.

What I have seen from the President of the United States, and frankly from John Boehner and George Miller -- there were two people I didn't think would be able to work together, it's those two, and yet in reality they've produced as much good legislation as has been produced in any domestic program in Congress in the time they have worked together for which I give them both a tremendous amount of credit.

But No Child Left Behind is demanding. If you don't think it's demanding talk to your school administrators. I'm talking to them almost daily. It's very demanding.

We have reformed, revised education research in this country to bring it into this century. We just did an IDEA bill and sure, George didn't agree with all of it, but I think we'd all agree that within that there are a lot of good areas in which we moved up, and hopefully we're going to do the same thing with Head Start.

The White House has been tremendously supportive of making these changes in education to help our kids. That's what it's all about. It's not about all of us, it's not about Head Start, it's about the three and four year olds out there, and making a difference in their lives. That's what we need to do.

And frankly Congress and this President have poured a tremendous amount of money, increases averaging more than 15 percent a year in education for the last three or four years, actually for the last six or seven years. So there have been some tremendous changes and some great leadership being shown at different levels in this country with respect to what we're doing.

I think we should be very proud of that.

No Child Left Behind cannot be ignored in this. Scientifically based research, a term that appears in there -- somebody counted the number of times, 67 times or something like that. Also it's talked about in Head Start now. We need to find out exactly what it is that we are trying to do and try to get to that particular point.

We are trying to strengthen and improve Head Start. We're not satisfied that the statistics show us that Head Start has improved those three and four year olds when they get to school. There's no question about that. That's obvious in seeing them in the classes, that that would be the way it is, but still they haven't gotten to the point that they are equal to the other kids who come from the ordinary backgrounds, not the lower income backgrounds, and we realize the circumstances are different but there's still room for improvement. I think we all need to understand that and approach this legislation in that light.

Let me just say with respect to the reauthorization, we're getting ready to introduce it. There is going to be some delay on it. Don't look upon that as some kind of a victory. That delay may be a matter of weeks as we consider the various elements that you're talking about here in getting ready for the introduction and bringing it through the committee and eventually to the Floor. There are several things that we're going to be looking at.

One is obviously improving the educational quality. I think when this program began in 1965, as I recall, the educational component was not that significant, and the worry was more about the health and the social aspects of it, and those things are still of extraordinary importance and I'll touch on that in a moment. But the bottom line is that we do need to improve the educational quality of these kids. It's significant that we do that. It's significant that we use some form of assessment, that's controversial, in terms of how we are doing it, but it can be done. I've talked to enough experts to realize that that is something that actually can occur. We can't have 20 percent of our kids not prepared to go to school. I've been to those kindergarten classes. I've seen them. And you see those kids who probably aren't going to make it. They say testing in first grade is almost inevitably an indicia of how kids are going to be doing in testing in 10th, 11th and 12th grades, and we need to make sure that we're getting gains in vocabulary, in writing, in math skills at the earliest time possible which means perhaps at some earlier time we need to start teaching letters and the various elements of number, mathematics, and the other steps that have to take place. That is simply of overwhelming importance.

The best chance for these disadvantaged children is our educational system and their education in particular, and quite frankly we need to start that as soon as possible. So that will be a major focus of all decisions that are made in terms of where we're going with respect to this.

The coordination issue, whether we go to the states or how we're going to do this is of

major importance, and I believe that we need collaboration between early care and education programs. We're doing this in my state, I'm from Delaware. We happen to be one of those states that's meeting most of the criteria of getting these things done. We believe very strongly in this. We're funding all of Head Start. We're being sure that the kids who want to take it are there, and also look at the other programs and try to get the coordination and the coordination with the social programs. That's essentially what the White House is really trying to do, and I think most of us would agree on that. It's a question of how, maybe not exactly how they're doing it, but how, on the fact that we should do it. I think they've made a suggestion all of us should pay a lot of attention to.

Enhancing professional development: The Head Start groups who are going to appear to a degree after we depart to go back to the Hill, or at least I'm going to depart and I assume George is, are going to be talking about enhancing professional development. They've been very supportive of that. I could not be more supportive of that. Obviously if you have skilled people in the classes with the kids they can make a huge difference.

Those skilled people, by the way, may not need a huge amount of education but they need some enhancements to afford them the opportunity to be able to educate better, and it's something that we absolutely have to do.

I get that primarily, by the way, from the Head Start providers in Delaware. From the Head Start providers in some of the poorest sections of Delaware who are very demanding about that within their own programs, ahead of anything we are doing with respect to legislation.

I'm a strong believer in the social service concept, that we need to continue to work with that. These are three and four year olds, even younger. We have Early Head Start programs, not as many kids in it obviously, but it's vitally important that we pay attention to all the different components that make up raising young kids.

Remember the households that these kids are coming from, and they may not have that same opportunity for medical checkups, for proper nutrition, for other circumstances that might help them in their upbringing in their lives, so I consider that to be important as well.

I also believe we should be looking at research and data in all of this. There's a lot of research that's been done in education in this country. I've got to tell you, most of it isn't worth a lot for a whole variety of reasons. It may be temporarily worth something but then it sort of falls apart from there. My judgment is that we need to do more in the area of research in data, and not just accept the fact that Head Start is doing a good job. I don't debate that at all, in fact I'll say it's doing more than a good job. It's doing a very good job. But can it do an excellent or an excellent-plus job in terms of preparing these kids? That's what we're trying to reach for is that next level up in order to do that, and I think sometimes you frankly need some pretty hard data and research

in order to be able to achieve that.

I look forward to the results of the National Impact Study which is going to give us a comprehensive look at the impact of the Head Start program on children and families, so it's going to be awhile in coming but I think that's going to be extraordinarily important.

These are our most vulnerable children. These are the children who are probably going to have problems later in life if we don't reach out and make a difference in their lives. We're doing that not just with Head Start but with other federal and state and local programs, and I think it's one of the best things that's happening in America. I think we all need to work together in terms of where we are going.

So I embrace all the suggestions that have been made. I think we need to look at all of them, from the White House to the providers in the small states, Head Start programs in this country, to the Members of Congress and put together a good program which we can pass in the House and the Senate in this reauthorization. I think when we reauthorized it I believe in 1998, we took steps in the right direction. I think we have to take further steps in the right direction now.

And as we say in Congress, I yield back.

**MR. HASKINS:** Thank you very much. I've never been yielded back to before. I appreciate it.

Amidst all these huge issues I would like to point out one little detail and that is that two Members of Congress and a member of the Administration observed the time limit, which I think three out of three under these conditions in this city is probably amazing. I think it's probably because they realize the brilliance out there in the audience and want to be sure we get to the audience questions. But before we do that I would like to ask a few questions.

Let's go to the end. Mr. Miller and Mr. Castle, can you imagine the Administration proposal or some version of it receiving majority support in the House and the Senate?

**MR. MILLER:** Some version of it in this town? That's a big door.

I think the Members of Congress are very interested in the reauthorization of Head Start. I think they want to build on the successes of Head Start. But I do not think they're prepared to take this program and I would say place it in jeopardy by passing it off to the states.

This is a program that I think Members of Congress take a great deal of pride in, as Michael pointed out, on both sides of the aisle. They feel very connected to this program. This

was Ron and Nancy's favorite program. Their communities feel connected to this. I don't think they're about to come in and kick the can over. I just don't see that happening, and I don't hear it in the Congress. In fact I hear just the opposite on both sides of the aisle. There's a great deal of caution.

Do we want to do many of the things that the President says he wants done in terms of early childhood education, in terms of improving the result, in trying to close that gap even more, to reduce the amount of state out by third and fourth grade in this population? You betcha. You betcha. I think we demonstrated our credentials in Leave No Child Behind. I think that's an earthquake in the educational arena.

We would like to make sure that these children have that full opportunity to participate.

So I think Mike's already said there's going to be a reauthorization, but I think there's going to be a lot of discussion a long time before the end of this process about whether or not we are in fact really truly improving and strengthening Head Start and expanding the opportunities for children to participate, or whether we're sort of dismissing and putting it off. Right now the burden of proof has not been met by the Administration if this is going to lead to an improved experience and outcome for these children.

**MR. HASKINS:** So under the current politics of the situation with regard to Head Start and the states assuming control, some limitation perhaps on that you think that that could not pass Congress?

**MR. MILLER:** Right now, absolutely not.

**MR. HASKINS:** Do you agree, Mr. Castle?

**MR. CASTLE:** I don't know, let me just start by explaining something I actually touched on when I spoke and that is the major education bills that have passed in Congress recently.

Basically the White House has often made proposals, they've been demanding proposals, I like that. We in the House have taken them up, and frankly a number of very positive changes have been made, and George has been at the heart of that, but sometimes not the fundamental proposals, changes perhaps that were wanted by George, by other Democrats. So you have votes in the House that tend to be a little bit one-sided. This is shown by IDEA, for example, recently in which there's a lot of very good things in it, but there are a couple of fundamentals that kept some of the Democrats from supporting it. Then the Senate does its version of it, and then it goes to conference. This is true in almost all these bills as a matter of fact, then a lot of them are rewritten at conference.

We've ended up with a fairly bipartisan answer to almost all these things which the White House has ended up supporting. They've been a partner in all of this, and frankly changes are made all the way along the line. People may get up and say I don't like this, I don't like that, but the bottom line is there's 80 percent of the input into these bills that they do like, and I've got a hunch this bill falls in that same category.

I can't sit here and say, Ron, for sure that the changes are going to take place. We just had the Kentucky Derby on the departmental change from HHS to Education. I'd say the odds are not as great as they might be on the favorite perhaps. On the state, I'm not sure where that is.

The concept of coordination -- I was a Governor. We're doing this in Delaware, it's appealing to me. Governor Rowland came down. We've had some testimony as to the fact that some states could do it, others couldn't. It may survive on some sort of sampling basis. I don't know what's going to happen. But I'll bet this. I'll bet we'll see more coordination survive, and to me that's really what it's all about. It may not be quite as has been drawn up by the White House now, and Margaret can comment on that, but I bet we move in that direction and I think that would be an improvement.

So structurally I feel pretty good about the legislation. Precisely as the White House has drawn it I doubt if even the White House really believes that things will necessarily happen completely that way. Maybe they do, I don't know. But I doubt if they do. [Laughter]

**MR. HASKINS:** So Margaret. This is what happens to Administration proposals. As great as they may be, they go up to the Hill and the Democrats say no way, no how, no version, and the Republican says well, we might be able to squeeze --

**MR. MILLER:** I didn't say that, Ron.

**MR. HASKINS:** Okay, let's go back to Mr. Miller here. What version would you think might --

**MR. MILLER:** We haven't seen a version yet. We're waiting for the introduction.

**MR. HASKINS:** But theoretically though --

**MR. MILLER:** I told you that in terms of program quality, in terms of outcome, and that's been strongly expressed by the White House. In terms of coordination, there's a lot of agreement on that. As Mike has said they're doing it in Delaware under existing law. They're doing it in North Carolina. They're doing it in Georgia. Where states want to step up and do this and add money to the pot they get a lot of coordination. Where they just want to tell people to coordinate themselves, people don't usually coordinate themselves terribly well. So there's a lot

to be done here in terms of the improvement of this program.

**MR. HASKINS:** Right. So let's say the Miller version is if the states will put in some money, the essence of the question is could the states have more control over Head Start funding? That's the essence of the issue. Can you imagine that that --

**MR. MILLER:** The states can do that today if they want. What we have here --

**MR. HASKINS:** Only if Head Start agrees, though.

**MR. MILLER:** You have a program with federal funding and federal quality assurances, if you will, that's locally run. I don't know, the Head Start councils in my district and the training programs are very often coordinated with other child care providers, they learn from one another, sometimes Head Start gets a little uppity and a little arrogant because they're the Cadillac and that offends people, and there are some things they can learn from other child care providers and from the education system. We work it out. We'd like to have it more broadly based, and maybe we ought to tell them that that's one of the things that they ought to be participating in. They're working it out in Delaware. Los Angeles County tells me they think they can work it out.

So I don't know why I have to come along and make this radical change when what we say we're interested in is the improvement for the children and in the outcome. I don't know why one's connected to the other when there's not much of a track record.

This is sort of like handing your children over to Michael Jackson. [Laughter] This isn't very good. He's going to be dangling them over the balcony the next time you turn around. [Laughter]

He's rich and he has resources and he has interest and he has all these things. He doesn't have any judgment.

**MR. HASKINS:** I think we can dismiss this meeting. Tomorrow's headline is, "George Miller says Administration turns kids over to Michael Jackson" --

**MR. MILLER:** No, Ron Haskins said that. Better yet. No.

**MR. CASTLE:** If he was on the Floor we could ask to have his words taken down, but I'm not sure we can do so --

**MR. MILLER:** No one take down my words against Michael Jackson today.

**MR. HASKINS:** Margaret.



I don't want to infuriate Mr. Miller, so let me say this in a modest way. I detect a slight lack of support -- [Laughter] -- for the Administration proposal on the Hill, and some Democrats even predicting that it's not going to pass, certainly not in its current form and maybe the idea of giving more control of the states will not survive the reauthorization process. How do you respond to that?

**MS. SPELLINGS:** I think a couple of things. We agree that the glass is half full, that there is need for more coordination, more accountability, more outcome measures, more standards and so forth, and that is all embedded in the President's proposal. It was just completely consistent with No Child Left Behind and the things that were described there. Teacher quality, professional development, standards, accountability and so forth.

This is not a plan that every state in America is ready to do today. Yes. Some people are far ahead and much more prepared and have labored in the vineyard of early childhood for a lot longer than others. So the thing that we have tried to stipulate in this plan is the ability to have those leaders come forward and talk about the coordination stuff.

Now I would just say having been in a state and worked at this at the state level, that there is no requirement for Head Start to coordinate with the school system, other child care providers or anybody else. There just isn't. In Texas we had three case standards for three and four year old programs that met the trajectory for school readiness and fed into the case weld standards, and Head Start has a federal mandate with federal programs and numbers of letters that ought to be described and understood and so forth, and so we said to the Head Start community. Hey, here's our three and four year old standards we'd like you to take a bat at, and they said hey, we've got the federal law that this is what we're supposed to do.

So yes, can Governors Mau Mau to the maximum extent possible? Yes. They can. They can try to and many of them are doing that. But what are things that we can do at the federal level, at the system level, to foster and facilitate that? I think that's our responsibility.

Why are we asking them to sort through and sift through and try to make this Rube Goldberg of child care and child development programs work better than we can here at the federal level?

So I think that's our charge. Is this the one and only way? Maybe so, maybe no. But what is the way? How are we going to make it more attractive for states? And how are we going to make it more attractive for families? I think one of the things about Head Start that is interesting, Congressman Miller called it a Cadillac, and it is, but we spend \$6400 a kid for a half day, nine month program. For folks who like lots of us in this room need full day, year round care, and are concerned about the cognitive aspects and the kids' school readiness. So what are things that we

can do to foster and better coordinate, better manage this program to make it work for parents?

**MR. HASKINS:** Everybody's talked about coordination and we've got money for the preschool programs for disabled, something like \$1.5 billion; we've got Title I preschool money, close to a half a billion dollars; states have their own money in the programs. Before states started cutting funds it was over \$2 billion. I don't think anybody knows exactly what it is now. Not to mention child care, which is at least another \$9, \$10, \$11 billion.

How can you coordinate this whole thing if one program is outside the aegis of state government? Can you find ways to do that?

**MR. CASTLE:** Ron, there are different elements of turning this over to the states. Part of the objection here I think is where the dollars are going to flow. Are the dollars going to flow to the state and the state can make decisions, and if they do, do they become fungible and do they go to other programs or whatever? And some of the Head Start providers want to make sure that the money comes to them. It's not really a question of coordination, it's a question of the economics of it all to a degree.

I bet before this is done that we will all agree that there will be some greater coordination amongst all these programs than there is today. How it's going to be done, I don't know for sure. Whether it's going to be done the way the White House wants it or in some other way, it's still I think very open to question.

But you just nailed it. There's a whole series of programs out there right now. Often child care and Head Start are often in the same building with the same kids. For example, in some of the programs for those who are disabled, are offered in the same building. And frankly, I think there does need to be a greater coordination.

I know if I was running a state at this point in my life I would absolutely want to know what is happening to those programs. Those programs are absolutely vital to help the kids who have the greatest needs get ready to go to school and you do want some sort of coordination. Does that necessarily mean that all the money channeled in to a Governor and all the money that's parceled out in a certain way? Not necessarily. But it does mean that Head Start providers,  
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**MR. HASKINS:** If not, Mr. Castle, then what?

**MR. CASTLE:** If not then you could very easily in a state have cabinet positions or coordinating councils, people who are talking to each other. The money could flow differently, but people who are coordinating concerns of what they're doing, measuring how the kids are proceeding, having some sort of standards and assessments age suitable to these particular kids

in preparing them for school so we have some idea what they're doing.

I think we're all essentially saying the same thing. It's just how we're going to get there. I think it can be done in a variety of ways and I think the states that are the most progressive frankly are doing it right now.

**MR. HASKINS:** Mr. Miller?

**MR. MILLER:** Margaret I think made the key statement when she said we're spending \$6400 on a half day program for these programs, and what we'd like is full day care for all of our children because we're working in all these other demands on it. We're going to do all that with the same amount of money?

New York is talking about getting rid of all its pre-K commitments from the state. Florida says it's going to accede to the wishes of the population and have statewide pre-K programs but they're not going to put any money into it and they're not going to put any quality into it because they can't afford it.

What are we coordinating with here? We're coordinating with a dysfunctional program. Why are we taking the best program we have in the nation with the best outcomes we have, and why are we deciding that we're going to turn it over to the poorest program? All of those children in the other programs really deserve the same opportunity that Head Start provides, but we're going to dumb down and dilute Head Start on the basis that somehow that's going to do it.

The Head Start commitment is what, about \$6, \$7 billion? And the states' commitment is \$2 billion. Are they going to come up with the other \$4 billion? They just have a maintenance of effort. The effort isn't much, folks. These are our children. This is the toughest population, the most difficult population to get the results that we want to have so that they can have the opportunity of taking advantage of an education. And somehow we're going to master this by diluting it? We're going to master this by marrying it up with states that can't do their own job? The state of Iowa says they can't improve their quality standards because they can't afford to. No. It doesn't work, it doesn't add up. the math is bad. The logic is bad. And the results are going to be bad.

Coordination, yes. Fine. Let's have more coordination. But do we have to do that by putting Head Start at risk? Do we have to do that by saying -- Maybe they should be coordinating with Head Start. That's not the complaint, though. The complaint is by a lot of people in other programs that Head Start doesn't coordinate with them. So what are we doing? Are we looking for people who want access to those resources? Are we going to add more children so now it's \$6000 a child, then it's \$5500 a child then it's \$5000 a child, and we already know that we have correlations between the quality of the teacher and the outcome and that it's

harder to keep those teachers and you have to pay them more, but we're going to reduce the cost?

This is absolutely contrary to what most of the people in this country believe they should have access to which is high quality child care for their child because they have to meet the demands of the modern American economy.

**MR. HASKINS:** Have you and your colleagues on the committee considered other -- It's clear that you think coordinating by giving money to the states is not going to work, so what other methods of coordination do you hope will get a full debate and --

**MR. MILLER:** I want somebody to come to me with all the barriers to coordination, because apparently in Delaware they're able to sort of knock them down. In my county they're able to, the threshold's not so high you can't get over it. I go again back to Georgia where they decided this is what they were going to do with their lottery money, they're going to put in major resources, and amazing, people started talking to one another because they had resources to talk with one another about. People came to the table with something. That's not what this proposal does.

Yes, we've talked about coordination at all levels in the Congress. We've talked about all of these issues. There is an intense interest and a sense of ownership of Head Start in the Congress of the United States. People talk about it more often than you would ever believe, and they visit it more often than you would ever believe.

It's sort of like the child nutrition program.

**MR. HASKINS:** Let me just get Margaret into this.

So if it is not -- Everyone agrees there has to be more coordination and Mr. Miller says, and Mr. Castle might even agree, that certainly we're not going to get any full-blown version of the Administration's answer to coordination which is give the money to the states.

Can you imagine other effective ways of coordinating the program? Is this the only, the best?

**MS. SPELLINGS:** I think one of the things that's embedded in this is we've called for the opportunity for a region, a county, a smaller -- start in a Harris County or in Los Angeles or whatever to work on coordination issues before the whole state.

I do want to say with respect to diluting services, whatever it is that we need to do to nail down, write down and ensure that we're not going to dilute services, we want to do that. There is nothing about that embedded in this proposal, period, end of discussion. That's not in our

interest.

And let me also say that it's not in a Governor's interest to not serve these kids well. And maybe we have this fundamental disagreement about states and their interests in serving kids and the kind of accountability that we have for them once they reach school age. This notion that the only people that care about young children are in this room and they aren't in the states is just, we just reject that.

I think they deserve the opportunity to have more tools in their tool kit to work with and to compel cooperation between various programs. They're not there now. Yes, Governors can convene meetings and so forth, but what do we have systemically and systematically that's embedded in these various systems, with lots of federal resources going into them, that fosters and compels that to occur? Nothing.

**MR. HASKINS:** Mr. Castle?

**MR. CASTLE:** Just a whole lot of thoughts, Ron, but very briefly.

First of all, our staffs are talking right now about the coordination, the Republican and Democrat staffs in the House of Representatives.

Secondly, there are a number of even just federal programs other than Head Start that serve the population. You named some of them, but early reading first and Early Head Start and programs for disabled that need coordinating at all state levels, or other state programs. Some states are doing more than others perhaps that also need some coordination.

I am a fan of Head Start, but I don't want to put Head Start some place high in the rankings here and consider everything else to not work or to be a failure or to not be coordinated. That would be a serious error.

I think we can protect Head Start and keep it as a good program, and frankly, I do worry about the cost of Head Start. I do think that's a lot of money for what we get out of it for those 900,000 kids. Having said that, I think they do basically a good job. You can still question the efficiency and believe they do a good job. But to not have that coordination is a disaster for these kids. That would be completely wrong. And we absolutely need some sort of coordination.

How do we do it? Perhaps we'll do it differently than the White House proposes. Perhaps the dollars won't be affected, for example, or perhaps there are other things that we can do, but these other programs perhaps can learn from Head Start.

It seems to me that anyone worth their salt who's running these programs or is running a

Governor's office or dealing with kids of this age would want that coordination to take place and we ought to somehow be able to process our legislation so that they will be able to do that. I think it's that simple.

**MR. HASKINS:** We're going to take a couple of questions from the audience, but I would like to caution you first, that the Members of Congress and member of the Administration have observed time limits. We don't want statements. We want questions as succinct as possible, please.

**QUESTION:** Walter Gilliam, Yale University. I'm a researcher.

In complicated issues like this I tend to turn towards data to hopefully guide some decisionmaking, and since the magic word of the day on this panel seems to be coordination I wanted to throw out a couple of piece of data and see what kind of response there is from people regarding what we know currently about coordination.

Based on not even off the press data that we have right now, about 20 percent of all Head Start grantees are in public schools or in private schools that are under the auspices of State Departments of Education. In addition to that there's about 54 state-funded pre-K systems operating in 40 states. Of those 54, 11 of them are state-funded Head Start systems accounting for about six percent of all of the state-funded children located in Head Start centers. Of the other state-funded pre-K systems that are in place, most of them have money that go from the state down to local providers, then they go out to subcontract arrangements from that point on.

Aside from the public schools, the number one vendor for state-funded pre-K systems is Head Start centers, and about 25 to 30 percent of all state-funded pre-K children in those systems are in centers that are located in Head Start programs.

When you add that all together, and keeping in mind issues of overlap within the overlap, about a third to about half of all the children in state-funded pre-K systems are actually coordinated into and through Head Start already.

Now bearing that in mind and the level of coordination that's currently happening, and also bearing in mind the fact that many states operate more that one state-funded pre-K system at the moment -- Louisiana has three different state-funded pre-K systems and many states don't already coordinate -- because when you think about --

**MR. HASKINS:** You need to get to a question.

**QUESTION:** So when we're thinking about coordination, we can think about coordination of Head Start with state-funded pre-K and also state-funded pre-K systems with the

K-12 systems in several states don't coordinate their state-funded pre-K systems at the moment through benchmarks and expectations with their K-12 systems.

What can we do to think about ways in which to encourage coordination where those coordinations haven't already happened when the mechanisms seem to already be in place? And in what way can we actually guarantee if we were to send Head Start to the states that that would actually lead to better coordination between the pre-K systems and the K-12 systems when in so many states that already have pre-K systems there isn't any coordination between those systems already?

**MS. SPELLINGS:** My short answer to that is that we would stipulate, we can certainly do this, and this will be self-limiting. For folks who aren't doing it already or haven't seen the wisdom of that, then this is probably not a plan for them.

So if we say if you have these conditions going on in your state, then and only then will you be entitled to have more flexibility with respect to professional development, resources, or whatever.

I think those are the sorts of things that we can write in to make sure that we are dealing with people and we're going to align accountability authority here, and resources, so that the folks who are doing the on-the-ground stuff that they can do on their own that that's a quid pro quo for more federal flexibility.

**QUESTION:** We've had a marvelous new set of performance standards that were put in place, as you well know, for Head Start, and especially the infant and toddler standards. As somebody who's a previous director of 0-3 and with the Hopkins School of Public Health. Children have the same developmental needs all the way across the country. Alabama children do not have different developmental needs than Delaware children or California children --

(END SIDE)

**QUESTION:** How is your plan going to make sure that the kind of undergirding to quality is going to continue across the country?

**MS. SPELLINGS:** I think the whole notion here is for states to prove to the Secretaries of Health and Human Services and Education that they are meeting those quality needs, and we have stipulated specifically professional development standards, measurement systems and the like. So not to pre-judge what states would describe, but that is certainly the kind of thing that we would be looking for with respect to that.

Certainly we know that developmentally kids in Alabama are the same as those in New

York potentially, but the whole philosophy of this is with respect to school readiness. Unless we're ready to federalize public education in America because third graders in Louisiana need the same kind of math as third graders in California, which I don't think we're ready to do, the whole idea here is to just do a better job between the federal system, the state system, and the local system. That's what we'd be looking for in the plan.

**QUESTION:** Wade Horn. Mr. Miller, you seem to paint states with a pretty broad brush as running pretty crummy pre-school programs. On one measure of quality credentials of teachers in the classroom in pre-school programs, we've done analysis and states actually have far higher thresholds in terms of the credentials that are required for teachers to be in the classroom in pre-schools. And if one believes that there is a correlation between credentials of teachers in the classroom and outcomes for kids, how does that jive with your assertion that states A, don't care about pre-school quality; and B, the assertion that somehow state pre-school programs are inherently inferior to Head Start in terms of outcomes and quality?

**MR. MILLER:** I didn't say either of those, first of all. I didn't say states didn't care. I started off by saying the states don't have the resources, and in this current atmosphere it's hard to believe that they would come up with the resources to maintain the quality and to provide the level of services that these children are currently getting. The test in the bill currently as proposed, we haven't seen the introduction of it, doesn't require that you maintain the same quality of services.

We also know in a number of states that they have not addressed the issue of quality in terms of teachers, or credentials if you will of teachers because they simply say they can't afford it, they wouldn't be able to reimburse for it, and they're not going to be able to attract those people.

It's a mixed bag out there. That's all I said. And the fact of the matter is we have study after study after study that these children in fact do better. And for the people who say they're not satisfied with these results, to lead us to believe that the results are going to get better with the dilution of the program, and that's what the current proposal lead to. Not by people of ill will, it's just simple problems that confront Governors, and what happens when this pool of money arrives?

The children who do better than these children come from a different environment, or they're the children from the same environment that have been put in even a more expensive, more intensive program. So there's something disingenuous about that debate.

**MR. HASKINS:** Mr. Castle?

**MR. CASTLE:** Just a point I'd like to make, Ron, in response somewhat to what Wade



asked, and that is this. We're sitting here in Washington, D.C. in a federal circumstanced debating programs that are basically run locally. They're not even run in the states, they're run in our cities and villages and rural areas throughout America. The people who are in charge of those areas, particularly the Governors of those states, will fill a void. Before No Child Left Behind most Governors paid scant attention to education. Education just took place. Nobody paid any attention to pre-school really. There weren't many kindergartens around and almost no pre-kindergarten programs around. Head Start had started but there wasn't a lot of function there.

There's a reality now. I give this President a tremendous amount of credit and a lot of others in this room. There's a real understanding that if we are going to educate kids well, we need to start at a very early age in doing that. And all these programs that we've been talking about today that I won't enumerate again, have become very significant in that. And the Governors and legislators and others interested in education in the states where in my judgment the level of interest is much higher than it is in Washington. After all, we're not really in charge of education. We only fund seven percent of education. These individuals are judged on this. So when those [NAEP] scores come out, when their state assessments are being done now, they're judged on that. That's why they're so concerned. And they're going to become even more concerned with the early education components including Head Start.

So let me tell you, the word coordination is very very important today because that coordination is going to take place because these Governors and these legislators and all these individuals who are involved with these programs in the states are sitting around tables right now and are saying what can we do to improve our test scores? What can we do to help our kids? I think this is beneficial.

What they're going to do is look at that early education and particularly those kids who are in lower income circumstances, and say we've got to do more to enhance their education. They're going to look at all these programs and realize gee, maybe we have four or five state programs. There are six or seven federal programs. We ought to be talking about that more.

So this is going to happen in some way or another. It's a question of how or when. Maybe it's premature to say turn it over to the states now, and maybe it's not. But the bottom line is that the states are going to be a heck of a lot more involved and that's beneficial because ultimately it's for the good purpose of helping our kids do better.

Head Start will survive and Head Start will do extraordinarily well, but I think it's going to be part of a bigger picture of everybody wanting to help those very young kids.

**MR. HASKINS:** Well, whatever might be said about the Administration's proposal and reauthorization it's clear that people on the Hill are already focused on this proposal, they're already debating it. The Administration's engaged. I think it's going to be extremely interesting

to see what comes out this year. I speak just for myself, but I think it's very refreshing when we've been so inundated by foreign policy issues for so long that now we're beginning to focus on domestic issues and I think it's only for the good of the country.

Thank you very much for coming. Give us about three minutes to change the panel.