

BROOKINGS INSTITUTION
CENTER ON CHILDREN AND FAMILIES PRESS BRIEFING

USING PRESCHOOL TO CLOSE THE EDUCATION GAP

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Falk Auditorium
The Brookings Institution
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Washington, D.C.

[TRANSCRIPT PRODUCED FROM A TAPE RECORDING]

C O N T E N T S

Introduction: STROBE TALBOTT

Overview: ISABEL SAWHILL

Moderator: RON HASKINS

Panelists: GOVERNOR MARK WARNER
Commonwealth of Virginia

REPRESENTATIVE MICHAEL CASTLE
R-Delaware

P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. TALBOTT: Good afternoon, everybody. Thank you all for coming indoors on a day when there are a lot of temptations to stay outside. But I think this will be a good program, and we appreciate very much all of you being with us.

I'm Strobe Talbott, the president of the Brookings Institution. I'd like to welcome all of you here. I would particularly like to welcome our special guests and participants, Governor Warner and Congressman and former Governor Castle. I would also like to thank two of our trustees of the Brookings Institution, Bill Coleman and Mario Morino, for being part of this event this afternoon.

I'm going to very quickly turn the podium over to my colleagues, Belle Sawhill and Ron Haskins, but I just wanted to underscore on behalf of the institution as a whole how proud we are to be associated with the launch of the new Center on Children and Families. The Brookings Institution has a long tradition of focusing on these issues. It goes back a long time, including with the leadership and participation of the people that you're going to be hearing from. But for reasons that I'm sure all of you understand, we felt that it was important to tighten the focus on children and families and the issues that so concern them, in particular the issue of poverty in general and the challenge to our country of improving the lives of disadvantaged children, more specifically.

The new center is ably led by two of our most outstanding scholars, Belle Sawhill and Ron Haskins. Belle is a vice president of the institution, the director of our Economic Studies Program. She is a former associate director of OMB, responsible for social policies in that agency. Ron is a senior fellow here at Brookings. He is a developmental psychologist and a former advisor to President Bush on welfare policy, a

long-time staff member of the House Ways and Means Human Resources Subcommittee.

I'm going to first turn the microphone over to Belle, who is going to provide a bit more detail on the new center, and then she, in turn, is going to turn it over to Ron, who will introduce the speakers and moderate a discussion.

MS. SAWHILL: Thank you very much, Strobe. I don't want to take too much time away from what I know will be a very stimulating set of remarks from Governor Warner and Representative Castle. But I do want you all to know that this is the official launch of Brookings' new Center of Children and Families. It will build on the work that we did earlier under the rubric of Welfare Reform and Beyond, but our mission and our agenda will be considerably expanded.

As you know, welfare reform required single mothers to work and employment rates among that group have increased dramatically. But as Hurricane Katrina has reminded us, poverty is still alive and well in America, and it is particularly alive and well among children. Last year, the poverty rate rose for the fourth year in a row, from 11.3 percent in 2000 to 12.7 percent in 2004, and it also rose among children.

So, as a nation we seem to be wealthier than ever, yet too many of our children and their families are falling behind. And it's not just the poor, I might add, but also those who are part of what I would call the bottom one-third of the American population.

While there are a host of issues affecting this group and America's children in general, the center intends to focus on four specific questions. First, we are going to examine the status of low-income working families and policies that might

improve their economic prospects. Second, we're going to explore policies that could increase the number of children growing up in two-parent families. Third, we're going to evaluate policies that could improve upward mobility among the nation's children, particularly the most disadvantaged. This will include looking at potential investments in their health care and in their early education and care that could make a difference. And finally, we will be examining fiscal problems confronting both the federal and the state governments at this point, with an eye toward, of course, restoring fiscal responsibility in this country, reducing the budget deficit, but doing so, hopefully, in ways that do not lead to reductions in effective investments in the youngest Americans and their families.

We're going to be partnering with a number of other organizations, including Princeton University, America's Promise, the Children's Investment Project, and a number of wonderful foundations that have supported our work. And we think that one of the ways we can be most effective is by encouraging these kinds of collaborations, using the scarce resources that we all have to convene people and bring all kinds of wisdom and information into the mix.

We're going to put special emphasis on communicating the results of our research to policymakers and other influential groups. Andy Yarrow is our outreach director. He's standing in the back of the room. Maybe you'll raise your hand very tall, Andy, so that people will know who you are. If you have ideas for us, information, questions on how to get our materials, Andy's the one you want to talk to.

Now I have the pleasure of turning this over to my wonderful co-director, Ron Haskins, who will introduce our distinguished speakers. And thank you very much to both of you for being here today.

MR. HASKINS: I'm going to begin by illustrating the way we operate around here. It is true, as Belle said, that poverty last year increased for the fourth year in a row. But at the end of those four years of increase, it was still almost 20 percent lower than it was in 1993, thereby illustrating the point that what works is work, because poverty is still lower than it was in '93 because so many single mothers are working and it's driven down the poverty rate in female-headed families.

So I'm sure that was right on the tip of your tongue, but I thought I'd just share that with everybody.

[Laughter.]

MR. HASKINS: How clever of us to think to show how we really are bipartisan around here.

I always look forward to these events, sometimes some events more than others. But today, I have to tell you, I've really been looking forward to this because we're very fortunate today to have two of the finest and boldest and most outstanding politicians in the United States.

First, Mark Warner, the governor of Virginia since 2001. His term will end in January. Many people are wondering, of course, what he will do next. We have a spirit here in Washington sometimes called "the Potomac." It's also called "the Great Mentioner." In the past it has been known to say "Bush. Bush. Bush" and "Clinton. Clinton. Clinton." And soon it may be saying "Warner. Warner. Warner."

Governor Warner is truly an education governor. In fact, he's infringing on our territory. He recently wrote a very nice piece in Education Next in the Fall 2004 issue. It does have one serious flaw, though. After a wonderful analysis of the public schools and what needs to happen in public schools to close the infamous gap between our low-income and minority children and middle-class children--and he makes many concrete recommendations-- there is no jargon at all in that thing. You know, if you're going to be a scholar at some point, you've got to get up on the jargon.

Also, his educational credentials were further burnished, of course, by being named the chair of the NGA's initiative on redesigning the American high school. And I have been told by people in Virginia that, under his governorship, that education funding has increased in some years more than ever in the past.

So a man both of ideas--expresses them in writing without jargon--and then delivers on his promises.

Then we're going to hear from Mike Castle of Delaware, an equally prominent and accomplished politician. He's been the member from Delaware since 1993. Before that, he was the governor of Delaware. And in the last election, in 2004, just to show you that moderation and intelligence work, he got more votes than any statewide politician in the history of Delaware.

He is without question one of the most respected legislators on the Hill in either party. He's played a very important role in several pieces of crucial legislation, including welfare reform. I could tell you at least 20 minutes of stories of things he did in welfare reform behind the scenes that nobody knows about that really helped to pass a bipartisan bill. And--I wouldn't have said this at the time--but he moderated the bill that

many Republicans from the Ways and Means Committee were supporting, and he did that in very clever ways. He's now the chair of the subcommittee on the Education and Workforce Committee that has jurisdiction over the Head Start program.

So both of these gentlemen are extremely well-versed both in the ideas of preschool education and in the actual raw politics of preschool and in funding preschool education, and we have invited them here today to initiate our new center to talk about preschool education and the role that it could play in closing the achievement gap between kids from low-income families and kids from middle-class families.

So, Governor Warner, thank you so much for coming.

[Applause.]

GOVERNOR WARNER: Well, thank you, Ron, for that introduction. I promise I will work on my jargon.

MR. HASKINS: You're in a good place for it.

GOVERNOR WARNER: Yeah, I am. This is a good place to do it.

I want to thank you, and Strobe, thank you very much for inviting me. I want to compliment Brookings on this new initiative. It is also great to share a stage with Congressman Castle, whom I've met only a few times but know of his work. I look forward to a vigorous discussion that we're going to have.

You know, what I thought I'd try to do--and I know somebody in the back will set that 15-minute timer; I'll try to get these remarks done in 15 minutes so we can move this more to a discussion as opposed to a speech--is, first of all, tell you a little bit about how I view the world of early childhood initiatives; secondly, tell you a little bit about what we are doing in Virginia right now, as any--I prefer "policymaker" to

"politician"--but as any policymaker would brag about what we have done in Virginia; and then finally close a little bit with a new initiative that I hope to be rolling out and will signal one of our audience here, Paul Hirschbiel, who's a dear friend, who's been really leading our effort in Virginia.

It seems to me that the data is absolutely clear that, from an investment standpoint, from a brain-development standpoint, from a policy directive standpoint, there are few places where we can get a better return than early childhood initiatives. I always get a little--as somebody who came to this issue with more focus on kind of K-12 and higher education, it's an area that I've had to get up to speed, beyond the fact that I've got three almost perfect daughters, some days.

But one of the things that strikes me is that early childhood initiatives cut across so many different policy areas that trying to have an organized governmental response, at least at the state level, is oftentimes challenging. I think when we think about early childhood, it means different things to different folks. To some folks, early childhood means early education--how do we make sure that we prepare that child for school. For others, we think about early childhood issues related around childcare, both in terms of access and the quality of childcare. Then there's a whole other universe of folks where, I think, when they hear the term "early childhood," often think in terms of health care-related initiatives.

In my mind, these three silos--childcare, education, and health care--need to be more merged together. And that is going to take, again, some creativity and, hopefully, some ideas here from the audience.

You know, as someone who's trying to get further up to speed on this, I have looked around at what is going on around the country. I mean, I'm still a believer that Jim Hunt still has the gold standard in North Carolina--and you don't understand how hard it is for a Virginian to acknowledge anything with a gold standard with North Carolina. But the Early Start and Smart Start initiatives that he has and the approach of trying to break this down on a more local and regional basis of delivery of services is something that has won a lot of appeal for me and something I'll come back to.

Georgia, obviously I've followed very closely what they're doing in terms of the preschool initiative. Very bold, very extensive. And actually, the candidate that I'm supporting to try to take my job when I'm finished in four months, Tim Kaine, who's running for governor right now in Virginia, again, has a very extensive proposal in terms of early childhood education.

And then, I've also been kind of getting up to speed on what Wisconsin's doing. And again, Jim Doyle and folks in Wisconsin, I think, have got a very interesting initiative to try to make sure that they provide appropriate childcare for low-income Wisconsinites.

My hope is that we can try to, you know, draw on each of these and other initiatives around the country and Virginia in terms of what I hope to accomplish and, hopefully, institutionalize over the next four months.

But before I get there, let me take a couple of moments and talk about what we have done in each of these areas. Let me start with the one that perhaps we've gotten the most recognition on, and that's children's health insurance. I remember when I was a job applicant for this position, it always drove me crazy that Virginia was

sending back tens of millions of dollars--I think in fiscal year 2001-2002 cycle, \$56 million--back to the federal government because we wouldn't draw down the full amount of funds for our S-CHIP program. In my mind, that was both morally wrong and, since this was still one of the programs that got more than a 2-to-1 federal match, it was financially wrong. We were viewed as one of the most cumbersome and most bureaucratic states in the whole country in terms of signing up kids for children's health.

Well, that made no sense, and we have changed that. We have taken what was a 13-page form, taken it down to a single page. We have actually even got it in Spanish. We have it in other languages as well. Now up to 30 percent of our applications are actually taken over the Web. And what is particularly, I think, valuable is, between our S-CHIP program, which we call FAMIS, and our Medicaid program, we have broken down the barrier between these two initiatives so that there is not the kind of revolving-door or wrong-door approach that if you've got a child that one month may qualify for FAMIS, the next month may qualify for Medicaid, and the poor family has ended up spending most of their time simply jumping through bureaucratic hoops.

We now have an approach that has no wrong door. We have a common application process. And while young people still migrate from one system to another, we do it with a minimum of bureaucracy and a minimum of pain and angst to the families involved. We have been very aggressive about reaching out to our Latino community, the fastest-growing community in the Commonwealth of Virginia, to make sure that those children are signed up as well.

As a result of these actions, we have signed up 131,000 more kids. And the Kaiser Foundation has recognized Virginia as going from kind of the bottom of the

barrel to one of the top states in the whole country, where we've signed up more than 97 percent of all of our eligible children. Actually, by having an outreach effort, we've discovered more--we thought there was only about 100,000, totally, eligible; we've exceeded that, because by doing an aggressive outreach, we find the universe is much bigger.

So this is something we're proud of in terms of health care.

On preschool, on education, obviously--I know Congressman Castle is going to talk about his piece of legislation. Forty states, in addition to their Head Start programs, have preschool initiatives, oftentimes for at-risk 4-year-olds. Again, with this audience here, I don't need to go through the reasoning of why taking that 4-year-old or that at-risk 4-year-old and putting him in an educational setting makes great sense. Again, this was an area where we had not done our part in Virginia. When I took office, we were investing about \$19 million on an annual basis; we're now up to \$61 million. We have, in terms of our targeted population, hit 100 percent enrolment. Clearly we have still fairly narrow eligibility restrictions, and I think that universe can be expanded. But in terms of at-risk fours, significant progress as well.

Another area that's not gotten as much attention but one that I think--and again, I'll come back to in closing--has some real value--and again, an idea that I've stolen from another state; I think Indiana was the leader on this--was a New Parent Tool Kit. One of the things that I think about the challenges as a relatively well-educated guy with a wife who's got a background in public health and a stable family, and trying to figure out what happens when your first kid arrives. I cannot imagine the challenges that a single mom without that kind of background has to go through.

So, partnering with the private sector in Virginia, we've created a new parenting tool kit that we're now getting out to about 70 percent of all new infants in Virginia, regardless of income level, with appropriate information, calendars--we even throw in a "Good Night, Moon" for good keeping to all of these parents. My goal, again, is to get that up to 100 percent and make sure that it is institutionalized on an ongoing basis.

An area that generated a lot of controversy in Virginia, but one that we have worked through, is that Virginia started three and a half years ago with some of the--what would be the politically correct term?--most--least strict, least comprehensive childcare regulations. Would that be, Paul, a good way to describe it? We were down at the bottom of the barrel again. And we have put in place additional childcare regulations that both put in a requirement for additional training for teachers, smaller staff ratios, improved safety standards. We've tried to reach with our legislators a compromise--some of the initial proposals didn't come all the way through.

But we believe that this new set of regulations so that we can start getting at a better job of evaluating quality of care will take us in a long direction. We've created--got here in the second or third row, Paul Hirschbiel, who's heading up an early learning council for me, where we've brought advocates, providers, and others to the table and are coming forward with a set of proposals on how we will institutionalize this.

A couple of final points. We are also trying to take from North Carolina--I hope you're seeing, Ron, that I'm stealing liberally from anybody that's got a better idea--where we have laid out on a regional basis in three parts of the state to try to start creating those early childcare councils that will bring in the private sector, the public

sector, and everyone concerned with the growth of that child from prenatal up to 5 or 6-- education, health care, and childcare related. We've got three of these efforts going on right now. Again, I hope to expand it.

Last couple of points. There's a model we have also created in Virginia that I think holds great promise. Twelve years ago, long before I was in politics, I started something called the Virginia Health Care Foundation. The Virginia Health Care Foundation is a public-private partnership that funds innovative service delivery models for underinsured and underserved Virginians. It's a great success. We've added 600,000 Virginians with health care. Of course, I would quickly say that in 1992 we had a million underinsured Virginians; we provided 600,000 Virginians with health care in 2005; we've still got a million underinsured Virginians, an issue that is absolutely linked to what we're talking about in early childcare. But this health-care foundation has, in effect, been a public-private laboratory of how to deliver different levels of services.

I hope to create in Virginia that same kind of public-private partnership foundation that would fund innovative childcare, education, and health-care related initiatives at the local and regional basis and hopefully, and then, help create these local and regional councils--again, perhaps not only modeled after North Carolina, but with a kind of next step up.

I'd like to combine that, something that also grew out of the Virginia Health Care Foundation, and was something that, again, came from a personal background. My mom's got Alzheimer's. And as I was trying to help my dad help my mom sort through all of the various options on how you deal with that debilitating disease, one of the things I found was that there was no common resource center. So

again, as an outgrowth of the Virginia Health Care Foundation and with very generous support from AOL and a series of other corporate partners, we created the most comprehensive--and we've been recognized by the Ford Foundation and others—a very Virginia-centric Web site called Senior Navigator, I would argue anywhere in the country, where you could go and not only find needs for long-term care in terms of--you can find health related activities, you can find where your bridge club meets, you can ask a question about drug interaction. We've trained 10,000 people around the state to help seniors who will never get on the Web, be the human navigator, the human front end.

And my hope is that we can create that same kind of tool in early childcare in Virginia. Because using the power of the Web and then linking that with kind of a human navigator, whether it's a discharge agent from a hospital, whether it's a social services worker, whether it's other folks in the faith community, to make sure that moms and dads who have got kids in this age cohort have access to appropriate, accurate, and good information. It's something that is very, very valuable and something that I hope that we can move forward on.

This is a little bit of a feel of what we're doing in Virginia. I want to close by again complimenting the Brookings Institution for being willing to take on this issue. As someone who, again, has spent the majority of my policy time on traditional K-12 and higher ed, I am absolutely convinced that what we do in prenatal-6 is going to have as much to do with how we drive that well-educated, innovative, entrepreneurial workforce that we're going to need to maintain if this country is going to maintain its position in the world and this global economy.

So thank you for your work. I look forward to the discussion. Thank you all very much.

[Applause.]

REPRESENTATIVE CASTLE: Let me start where the governor left off by thanking the Brookings Institution for allowing me to be here, although it was a fairly easy decision for me. I appreciate the opportunity that Brookings offers to a lot of people in terms of educational background.

But I've got to tell you, in this particular case, when you really scratch your head and think about social-policy programs, you realize there really have not been a lot of successes out there. But two of the individuals involved in this program today are people I've worked with on two programs that have met with a good deal of success in the United States, at least from my point of view. One is Ron Haskins on welfare reform.

Welfare reform is not a matter of saving money or getting people off of welfare. To me, welfare reform has always been a function of giving people an opportunity to become self-sustaining and, obviously, to improve their own self-worth in terms of how they look at themselves and perhaps even financially. And in my judgment, that has worked far better than we ever thought that it would. And without Ron Haskins, I'm not sure that would have happened.

But Belle Sawhill may have topped that on something I worked with her on, which is reduction of teenage pregnancy, which has been reduced by one-third in the last 10 years. The goal is to reduce it by another one-third. We're going to get to Italy's birth rates there if we aren't careful about all this teenage pregnancy stuff.

[Laughter.]

REPRESENTATIVE CASTLE: But the bottom line is, frankly, that America is still far ahead of other countries in, actually, what plays into what we're talking about here today, quite honestly, because early teenage birth is a harbinger often of an inability to cope with the social issues and the educational advancement and the other things that we have to do.

So I'm pleased to be here. I'm pleased to be sharing this with them.

And for Governor Warner, I must say this. We haven't worked together on anything, but I think he's working on the high school reform with the National Governors Association. I'm very interested in that. I think that's something that needs a tremendous amount of attention in this country. And as head of the subcommittee that works on education, the Education and Workforce Committee, Mark, I can tell you that is something that I think we need to all be focused on a heck of a lot more in the United States of America. So hopefully we can have a victory, too, someplace here in the next few years that we can look forward to for the whole future of our country.

I think we can all agree here on one principle, at least I don't think you'd be here unless we could, and that is that every child, regardless of his or her economic status, should have the best chance possible to succeed. But I think we'd also probably all agree if we think about it, although it may not impact anybody in this room directly, but when you think back on the history of what can get in the way of a child being able to advance to the starting line equal, which is an expression I use.

Using first grade as the example of that, you realize it begins probably at the moment of conception. I've already mentioned teenage birth, which is an issue,

obviously. Lack of health care is obviously another issue of tremendous significance in terms of ultimately what may happen to a child as far as the future is concerned. Clearly the income level is important. We know for a fact that people who come from higher-income circumstances generally are better educated, generally would give their kids a better opportunity. If you are born and the color of your skin is not white, there may be some bias against you in some way or another, which may not be intentional but may be unintentional, but we know that more kids, even though their abilities are no less, who are African American, for instance, are classified as learning disabled--mistakes like that continue to happen in the United States of America.

So this stuff is evolving from the very beginning. There's a whole raft of statistics on this that I won't go into, but the bottom line is that we still have a long way to go as far as this country is concerned. Having said that, I think we're ahead of a lot of other countries with respect to our early problems, but I do believe we have still a very, very long way to go.

And so as a result, this is an area that I've been interested in for many years, going back to ancient history, when I was lieutenant governor of Delaware through today. And I think it's something that all of us, Mark, in government will always be interested in and need to continue to work on. When I was the governor of Delaware, I put together a program called Focus on the First 60 Months, probably not a lot different than a lot of other programs other governors have put together. I then realized that maybe we'd better be looking at the first 69 months. And we worked on everything from health care to education to daycare to whatever it may be, trying to improve the lot of kids.

But we realized that kids born to lower-income circumstances without the opportunities probably weren't going to have the same chance as everybody else. It's something that is extremely difficult to overcome at times, but there are a few things that we can do about it.

The program that I'm going to talk to you about today--and then we'll get to the Q&A when we can have some fun--is Head Start. Head Start is a little controversial. There are individuals, including one I will not name who was a prominent member of Congress in Washington up until recent years, who wrote me a rather scathing e-mail--actually, it was a fax--right after we passed this Head Start bill I'm going to talk to you about last week, sort of condemning Head Start altogether. So we're not in total agreement that Head Start is something which actually works.

Fundamentally, it is a program for mostly 4-year-olds. You might think about it as being pre-kindergarten in many ways. And Early Head Start, which serves some 3-year-olds in the United States of America. Head State is aimed at children at 100 percent of poverty or less, in order to give them an opportunity to, as I've said, try to get up to the starting line equal.

As you also know, and as Governor Warner can tell us, most of the states now are developing some sort of kindergarten programs. Not all have 100 percent universal kindergarten, not all have full-day kindergarten at this point, but more and more states and more and more school districts are doing that. So to some degree, it's a hand-off circumstance.

I think most of you here, or at least some of you, probably know the history of Head Start in that, to a degree, it was a poverty program. It wasn't purely a

program just for children; it was a way of offering people an opportunity for employment. Actually, Head Start organizations are independent organizations which receive a grant through the Department of HHS and go about their work in that way, and so as a result, a number of them were created all over the United States of America. And education really wasn't necessarily a very focused goal as far as Head Start was concerned. And obviously, at that age, and particularly dealing with children at 100 percent of poverty or less, you were dealing with circumstances where health and nutrition and a variety of other programs do take--did then and still today take a very high priority in terms of what we have to do. But education was not always at the fore.

This program has served some 20 million children in the United States of America since the mid-1960s. Today it has over 900,000 children each day, and the number of grantees across the United States of America is 1,600. We just did pass legislation last week in the House of Representatives--I was a little surprised it came up, what with Katrina and all the other problems going on. When they gave me notice it would be on the floor, I said that's good. I've been working on embryonic stem cell research, which is a passion of mine, and put that aside and went to work on getting the Head Start bill ready for presentation on the floor, and we were able to pass it.

We passed it out of committee earlier about 48-0, and then when it got to the floor, there was an amendment, what's called the faith-based amendment--it's been put in a lot of legislation--which allows faith-based organizations to discriminate in terms of their own faith as far as hiring is concerned, and it upsets many legislators and as a result, it loses votes. So we only got 231 votes out of the 435 for this, which is

discouraging. Because I think we all agree with the basic underlying principles that are in this legislation.

There's a number of things that are in there. Frankly, most of these are taking the whole education component of these young children and trying to advance that more than we have heretofore. For example, we identify the need to develop language skills. We talk about the need to have pre-reading knowledge, including an interest in and appreciation of books, reading, and writing; pre-mathematics knowledge, such as recognition of numbers and counting; cognitive abilities related to academic achievement; and social development important for environments, constructive for child development, early learning, and school success.

This is also something the states are doing. And this same bill failed to become law two years ago when the bill which we passed in the House of Representatives--by even a smaller margin, one vote--had a state pilot project for eight states, which I still think, frankly, is a good idea. I believe the states are doing more and more in this area. I'd like to see integration of the state programs and what the federal programs are. But the Head Start Association, which is very jealous and possessive of their independent status as entities, would have no part of that and so lobbied very hard against it and very effectively. And unfortunately we didn't have the same, perhaps, emergency and effectiveness on the other side and as a result had trouble passing it in the House. It never passed in the Senate and, as a result, never became law.

So we came back with the model which I'm talking to you about today, which has a good deal of educational component in it, perhaps even more than we had in the earlier bill. It also knocks down some of the inability of the states and the Head Start

groups to be able to talk to each other, integrating services more with school readiness programs. We did it by language rather than by pilot programs, and as a result of that, we feel encouraged that we're going to have more alignment of the academic programs of Head Start with what's going to happen when these kids go on to kindergarten.

So the legislation did pass. It has now moved over to the Senate, where I presume Lamar Alexander, Senator Lamar Alexander from Tennessee, will be working on it primarily--he has before--in an effort to put it together in order to bring it forward so that Congress can actually pass it and it can be reauthorized. If you're not familiar with this--and I think a lot of you are--but if you're not familiar with the process, this is an authorizing committee and we're reauthorizing. That means we're looking at the structure of it and reforming it or whatever. In the meantime, the appropriation process allows it to go on even if we don't reauthorize it. You just don't make it a better program. I must tell you, there's a heck of a lot of appropriations on Capitol Hill that don't have reauthorizations--unfortunately, because I think it's good every five or six years, or four years, even, to look at these programs and to reauthorize them, but sometimes it's very slow to happen. And that's what's happened in this particular case.

We think that what we've done will cause these programs to be far better than they have been heretofore, will allow these children to go on into kindergarten and perhaps have a better opportunity than they have today in order to achieve success.

I don't think this is enough. I think a lot more has to be done. Frankly, I think a lot more has to be done throughout all the years of school in providing opportunity for young people. But I think it's extraordinarily important to find those programs which can work and to individually craft them in such a way and tailor them in

such a way that we are making them work better and, in this case, improving the opportunity for our young people to be able to advance; and in this case even further, to improve the opportunity for our young people from families who are relatively impoverished to be able to be given the opportunity to advance in education.

As I look at the future, I see education as an absolute necessity. It is no longer something that is perhaps voluntary or, if you want to advance, you can take it. You go into a factory now, you're going to be working probably with a computer rather than by hand. You go into almost any kind of a business in this day and age and you're going to find the absolute need for education. And I'm afraid that we're going to leave a generation behind if we do not educate better. And I think we have to start as soon as possible.

So for that reason, I think there is a tremendous payoff in terms of what we're doing in education. And I must say that while I believe there is a significant payoff, I am also cognizant of the fact that the federal government can't do everything. For instance, it can't rebuild all of New Orleans. It's just not that simple. There are some very tough choices that are going to have to be made and there are some tough choices for these early childhood programs as well. So sometimes you have to put your money into some and not into others, and make them better. My judgment is if we're going to do that, let's make it as good as possible.

This is a program which is extraordinarily popular among members of the Congress of the United States, but it is a program which can become somewhat controversial because change is not easy to bring about. For that reason, we've struggled a little bit with what we are doing. But in my view, it is a strong component in terms of

the federal involvement and engagement in trying to make this world a better place for our young people, particularly our young impoverished people, and, hopefully, give them the opportunity they all deserve.

Thank you.

[Applause.]

MR. HASKINS: Now, our procedure for the rest of the program is as follows. I'm going to pose a few questions and will get some lively answers, and then I'm going to turn it over to the audience and give the audience a chance to ask questions. So those of you who are prone to ask questions, dream them up. And I would want to point out to you before you ask your question, that everybody came here to hear from the speakers on the platform, not from someone asking questions. So please ask succinct questions, a rule which I will now violate.

The first question, which was laced throughout your discussion, is definitely the biggest political question now. And let me pose the issue this way: I think that the recent national evaluation of Head Start definitely supplies the best thing that we've ever had. And the impact of Head Start on kids' school readiness is modest at best--it might even be called worse than that--for our investment of \$9 billion a year. So these kids are not going to the starting line equal by any means. We know that very clearly, not just from that study but from other studies as well.

We've got probably \$25 billion out there in the countryside supporting preschool programs, either childcare or Head Start. And every single one of those programs has a very substantial state input and indeed state control, except Head Start,

as you pointed out. The money comes right from the federal government down to the local level.

So if a state, like Governor Hunt in North Carolina, decided they wanted to create a unified program and coordinate all the resources they have as a step toward getting more resources and show that they're using the maximum resources that they have available, they may have a lot of trouble doing that. And indeed, Governor Hunt regularly says in his speeches, said he did everything he could to get control of Head Start and he could not get control of Head Start.

So the question is why was the opposition so strong in the Congress? And the question for you is, if there were an opportunity for the state to control Head Start, would Virginia want to do that and be able to coordinate all its preschool dollars?

Mr. Castle?

REPRESENTATIVE CASTLE: Thank you, Ron. Let's just take questions from the audience instead.

[Laughter.]

REPRESENTATIVE CASTLE: The reason the opposition was so strong in the Congress of the United States--let me give you a little history first. The president recommended originally that all 50 states be able to do this on a pilot basis. We knew we could not get that passed. We also knew we couldn't move it from HHS over to Education, so we didn't even try to put that in the bill. And I'm a moderate Republican, but I'm talking about John Boehner, who's a conservative Republican, who made these decisions, who's the head of the committee. And then we decided to try to make it an

eight-state pilot project because we knew we couldn't get 50 states passed at all because there was a lot of protestation.

That came from something called the Head Start Association. I remember I mentioned there are 1,600 of these organizations out there. They're organized. They're actually very effective. I don't agree with them in terms of how they lobby and what they've lobbied for, necessarily, because I happen to agree with the premise of your question, Ron, that we ought to be doing a lot more with the states. But they are very effective. They don't want to give up their programs. These are--I don't want to misuse this term, but they're fiefdoms, to a degree. They control their own dollars, they control essentially what they do. There's about an 800-part questionnaire they have to deal with each year with HHS, but I think they've learned how to deal with that relatively routinely. And as a result, they very much enjoy their independent status and they don't want to hear about the states being involved or whatever.

Head Start, as I also indicated, is popular back home with members of Congress. We represent 435 divided districts across Virginia, Delaware, and the rest of the United States of America, and they do a heck of an effective job of lobbying. And that was as effective a job as I have seen. And I realize when we're not going to be able to win something. And as I indicated, we won it by one vote with that eight-state pilot project in it.

With everybody getting up on their feet, I might add, and saying this is a great bill but--and they cited this one incident that they did not like. So we went back to the drawing board this year and we put together the legislation again. And Ron, there actually is quite a bit more in terms of state collaboration in there than there ever has

been heretofore. So while it's not under the control of the states as, frankly, I would have liked--and we'll hear from Governor Warner here in a minute--he might have liked and Governor Hunt would have liked, the bottom line is that there is more state involvement and control than there has been before.

Frankly, I've convened meetings in Delaware since I've been in Congress with the early education people at our department of education, so they do communicate with each other. So we do have some communication. I'm not saying this as an excuse, because I don't disagree with you. But I'm just saying it was a practical way of trying to work this out so we could get a bill passed. Which we did this year, and now it's over in the Senate and we'll see where it goes from there.

So I'm on your side in terms of how one thinks this should be worked out, but I have to deal with the pragmatism of getting legislation passed and making it better. And I think our bill's actually a pretty good bill to do that.

MR. HASKINS: Governor Warner?

GOVERNOR WARNER: First of all, let me put my caveat on the front end, that I haven't seen Congressman Castle's bill, so I don't have all of the details of what has come out.

From a broader perspective, though--and we have somebody who's visited an awful lot of Head Start programs around Virginia--I've seen some very good programs. The broader philosophical underpinning, though, of can we move this into more of a school-readiness initiative, I think makes good sense. I'd be interested in something that might even, particularly from what little I understand about the road you may have in the Senate being a little bit challenging. . .

REPRESENTATIVE CASTLE: Nobody understands that, don't worry.

GOVERNOR WARNER: But, you know, is there a way to create incentives to encourage some of these Head Start programs to move towards these goals, the goals you've laid out, that might be an incremental step? Number one. Number two, clearly I would, as a governor, and there's no governor around that doesn't want to have more authority over his or her initiatives. And I've been dealing with very much on the Medicaid issue, one of the things you made mention of national interest. The one thing that may have cured me of actually being involved in any national issues too much is testifying before the House Emergency and Commerce Committee on Medicaid. And I would add, I was chairman of NGA and we've got the only bipartisan Medicaid reform. It isn't perfect, let me assure you, but we have 50 governors hanging together on Medicaid reform that has probably taken some of the same slings and arrows that you are taking, Mike, in trying to form that bipartisan coalition. So I have a great deal of respect for that.

I'd be interested in more local authority. I'd like to make sure that there was metrics and very clearly definable goals. And if programs are not preparing the kids appropriately, make sure that there's got to be a remediation piece. One of the things I continually get in trouble with, say No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and some of the other education issues out there, it's great on setting metrics and less on assessments, but there doesn't seem to be as much emphasis on [inaudible]. When we discover that child who needs the extra help, where's the remediation going to come from?

And the final point I would make, as I've tried to talk around a little bit of this here [inaudible], I would love us to take--and this would be probably totally

impossible in the Washington world, but wouldn't it be great if we took all of federal education-related legislation from Head Start to NCLB to the higher ed to the Perkins Act, and actually had all of them aligned both in terms of funding streams and policy goals?

Again, it's easy to say that. As a governor I'd have to live with these guys. But if we were going to bring rationality to this process, it sure would make more sense if we started with a child prenatally and there was some at least direction on where we hoped the education of that child and the upbringing of that child would go.

MR. HASKINS: I certainly hope I didn't say anything about rationality and federal policy. If I did, I made a mistake.

We have had the goal of educational equality, bringing kids to the starting line equal--I think that's an exact line from President Johnson in 1965--for decades. And we're not a lot closer than we were four decades ago. And as far as I can tell, there is just no question that the single best place to invest the money would be in preschool programs. Now, we have some arguments around the edges of this, but I think everybody has to agree on that. If we could have high-quality preschool programs, it would have the biggest impact on educational equality and closing the gap between minority kids and kids from poor families and kids from more advantaged families than anything else we know how to do.

Now, several people have recently put estimates on what it would cost to really do this and make sure that every kid below--not just poverty, but some income criterion, say 125 percent of poverty--got a high-quality, full-day, year-round program that would adequately prepare them for public schools. Steven Barnett, who's been here

several times, an acknowledged expert--I believe he's testified before your committee-- puts it at about \$90 billion. An economist in North Carolina named Blau put it even higher than that. It occurs to me that at the federal level we have some financial difficulties.

And can you imagine a bill coming to your committee saying we're going to put another \$5 billion into Head Start, let alone \$50 billion or \$5 billion in any imaginable preschool program? And can you imagine in the next number of years, six or eight or 10 years, that the federal government is going to come up with any serious money to fund preschool programs? And if they don't, can you imagine that states like Virginia can come up with that kind of money to fund it fully at the state level?

GOVERNOR WARNER: I'm glad he keeps asking you to go first, my friend.

REPRESENTATIVE CASTLE: Yeah, I don't know about this deal. If this were a debate, I'd be protesting already.

I don't know, Ron, how you can possibly say the federal government has any fiscal problems, based on all that I see of it.

[Laughter.]

REPRESENTATIVE CASTLE: We can write money. You seem to forget how we make money here in the United States of America. We control the Bureau of Engraving and Printing.

[Laughter.]

REPRESENTATIVE CASTLE: I mean, I understand--I know Ron and I sort of understand his underlying concerns here in terms of what we are doing. Because

there's a lot of money pumped into these programs now. They're probably not coordinated the way they should be coordinated. I think we probably all agree that these early childhood programs are of vast importance, although I don't want to ever omit the importance of family, whatever that family is. I realize family structures are different. I don't think we can ever, ever overlook that. And I think motivating families is of extraordinary importance as well. In fact, in some ways I think it's even more important, if we knew how to do it. But unfortunately, we're sort of institutionalized, so we as a government need to sort of gather everybody in a nursery room or a classroom and therefore do it that way. We don't do a very good job of reaching out into the homes and families and maybe the culture of television or whatever else it is we could do to really approach it from that point of view.

But there are going to have to be limits as far as this is concerned. I don't want to get into a whole fiscal speech except to say I wrote a little letter to the president yesterday, which I'm sure he couldn't care less about--and if he ever reads it, he will care even less than you might think about it.

MR. HASKINS: He's probably poring over it, you know, underlining your key phrases.

REPRESENTATIVE CASTLE: It basically called for an economic summit on the basis of how can we keep on doing all these things. I mean, you know, between Katrina and Iraq and just the pork barrel spending and some of the other problems, the time has come to bring all this back.

But it's going to have to be on a controlled basis. And quite frankly, if Head Start is not working as well as it should and it's costing us \$9 billion a year or

whatever the dollar number is on that, and some of these other programs aren't working as well as they should, we've got to have the guts to make, frankly, the changes which are necessary. I hope that the bill we've approved in the House is going in that direction. I think that it is. I don't know if it's going as far as it should, but I think that's something that needs to happen.

But I would just advocate one thing, and that is, just because a program exists, does not necessarily mean that program has to go on in perpetuity. And I can't tell you how hard it is to get rid of programs in the Congress of the United States of America. It's just absolutely astounding. And as a result, they tend to go on and on and are self-perpetuating and keep costing us more money. So there are serious financial problems in that area, and Congress, frankly, needs to face up to it. That's a pretty general answer to your question.

MR. HASKINS: So let me make it more specific, though. I really want to hear your answer to this question.

I agree with everything you say. We spend money hand over fist on complete tripe and junk, and here we have a program that addresses a national goal that we've agreed upon as a nation for decades and we have something that, potentially at least, and in fact all around the country, has been demonstrated to more than pay for itself. Can you imagine even spending the measly sum compared to the spending you're talking about, another \$5 billion a year--could you imagine bringing a bill to the committee for \$25 billion over five years? Would there be a chance that it would make it even out of committee, let alone through the Congress?

REPRESENTATIVE CASTLE: My view of that? No. And the reason is that we do everything incrementally in Congress. You very rarely ever increase anything--unless you have an emergency, like a Katrina or a war. You very rarely increase anything dramatically over where it has been before. And in the Congress of the United States, where you have a very conservative House and a fairly conservative United States Senate, it's just not going to be that easy to get social-spending programs increased at this point. And that's not going to change anytime very soon. It may change over a period of 10 years. It's not going to change in the next two or four years.

So from a very practical point of view, the answer to that question is you're not going to get huge increases in these programs. You will get incremental in cost-of-living plus maybe a little bit more.

MR. HASKINS: So from the states, in their immense fiscal capacity, can you imagine serious new spending on preschool programs over the next decade or so?

GOVERNOR WARNER: Let me try to answer it a couple of ways. One of the things about Congressman Castle that I respect is that he was a governor. And unlike his current job, you know, governors do have to have those budgets balanced. And that sense of fiscal reality, I would echo exactly what he said. We have to deal with that in a straight-up way or we put our nation at peril.

I would argue in a small way that is what we did in Virginia. When I first got elected, the shortfall was six times--they said it was seven--my predecessor said 700 million bucks. It was really \$3.8 billion. My immediate reaction was to wonder whether it was too late for a recount.

[Laughter.]

GOVERNOR WARNER: It ultimately grew to \$6 billion. We, by the force of that shortfall, made some of the hard choices that have not had to have been made in the Congress because there's always the ability to go into deficit spending.

But the part of the story that even in the state where the mantra to get elected was, you know, promise to spend on everything, but promise to cut your taxes at the same time was the way to get elected, and that was kind of viewed as the political path to power--what happened in Virginia, and in a bipartisan way, we had an honest, straight-out discussion with the people of Virginia, okay, we've cut this much, we've got to get more resources, and even in Virginia we built a bipartisan coalition, fixed our budget and made additional investments, most of it not on early childhood, but on K-12.

I do believe there may be some window here. Whatever the--whether it's an early childhood initiative, whether it be emergency independence, there is a yearning from our people to fix something at this point. It will have to come coupled with some cuts. I would have never been able to budget in tax reform in Virginia if I hadn't cut the heck out of virtually everything else other than K-12, Medicaid, and early childhood in Virginia.

So I think there may be some window here where a federal-state approach on this issue might get more traction. I also think, though, that part of the debate cannot be government only. There has to be a role for the philanthropic community--my good friend Mario Morino, here, in Venture Philanthropy Partners, what he's doing in the national capital area with kids at risk is tremendous. I think there is a role for business, as many still-remaining progressive businesses provide some level of childcare or

support for families as a competitive advantage. I think there is a role for the faith community. I think there's a role for the private providers.

I don't think we're going to get there if it's just saying, okay, Feds, write the big check. But if we could--I think there is the growing sense that this is an absolutely worthy investment, but it's going to take everybody anteing up a little bit, not just the government.

MR. HASKINS: Great.

Audience?

QUESTION: Ines Cifuentes, CASA of Maryland.

I want to go back to early childhood. One of the things we now know from all the research on language and the brain is that if it's dealt with very early-- particularly everything that has to do with dyslexia, which is before they start school-- then you can actually deal with it and it actually changes the way the brain patterns are-- you know, you can actually take care of that.

From what I've seen in schools, our biggest problem is actually kids reading. So they may learn to decode, but they're not actually learning how to understand what they're reading. And perhaps if we were to take care of that very early, then we would actually have kids reading -- particularly among the poor. Because we have way too many kids, you know, in high school who are reading at the third-grade level.

So, if you could comment on that and what can be done in those early years, whether it's through Head Start or anything else, what kind of impact that would have.

And then, also. the connection between the early years, up to 5, and what happens when we put them in regular schools, given that most of the public schools for poor children are poor.

REPRESENTATIVE CASTLE: Well, I just have several thoughts in response to your question. It's hard to get very specific; it's such an important, significant area. I mean, I think you've hit on something of overwhelming significance. But I--and this isn't escapism, but my view is that sometimes we need to look beyond government in these various things. I already mentioned the parents. I mean, I have, you know, seen it in household after household, parents reading to children, doing letters with children, a whole variety of things.

I remember somebody in Congress, on our committee--it was Johnny Isakson, who's a senator now, from Georgia, talking about I think it was his wife reading to their children while they were waiting for the children to be born. And he wasn't sure it would do any good or not, but he's convinced now probably it did.

I just think it needs to start very early. I think it needs to start culturally. These kids, particularly impoverished kids, are often put in front of the television set a lot. You know, let's get programs that can help with the educational component as far as that is concerned.

I think in each of the institutionalized programs, starting with Early Head Start, daycare programs, Head Start programs, the various state programs which exist, should always have an educational component and I think reading should be a very major part of that. I think also, personally I believe that as early as possible in elementary school we should start with reading and with letters and with writing. I

mean, I'm frankly surprised at the inability of even college students today to write with clarity, and I would suppose that their reading is not as crisp as it should be either.

And I may be wrong about that part of it. And so as a result, I think it's a societal thing in which we have to do, you know, a heck of a lot more. It's tough, and I also worry, particularly about the low-income population--I mentioned this a little bit in one of my little talks I gave here, and that is, the kids who are identified as being learning-disabled, very early on, often because they cannot read.

So we may need special teachers. We've done some appropriations for that and we do have some remedial dollars in No Child Left Behind with respect to this as well. We should try to overcome that as well as we possibly can. One reason I'm very supportive of No Child Left Behind, by the way, is the fact that it's a rising ship situation.

All the subgroups have to be able to pass the test, so to speak, if you will. I think that's vitally important. I think we have to look at the low income, we have to look at different ethnic backgrounds, whatever it may be, and make sure they're all given that opportunity. Hopefully, that's going to help with reading, and ultimately, writing as well too.

MR. HASKINS: Governor, you want to add anything?

GOVERNOR WARNER: We've done some on early reading specialists. I wish I absolutely knew what was the best program or model to get that 3-year-old or 4-year-old familiar--I do think there was a step, that we began to talk a little bit about alignment, so that whatever preschool education a child goes through, there's some way it then meshes with the education the child gets when they go into public schools.

I agree with Mike as well about there clearly is that parental role, but how you really incentivize or penalize that, I'd love ideas, and interestingly enough, from a political spectrum, anything that really pushes those parents to do more reading, that comes with anything other than kind of "Wouldn't this be nice that you do this?" really would generate, I think, an interesting coalition against it from both the more left and the more right.

But probably there's some folks in this room--if you've got some ideas, I'd love to hear them.

REPRESENTATIVE CASTLE: You know, I'd just like to add one thing. Something you said, Mark, triggered this, and that is in our bill, in the child care, in the Head Start bill, we talk about scientifically-based education research, and that's another bill that I helped get passed, went through my subcommittee and I sponsored, which created the Institute For Education Research, which is a scientifically-based research entity now under Russ Whitehurst. You don't hear much about it. It's in the Department of Education.

The old education research was terrible. I mean, they approved every program that came along and they let you sort of choose from it. They now have real education researchers on there, and they're really going to look carefully at these programs and put the stamp of approval on those things which really work.

Because I agree with what Mark just said, I wish I knew what worked. In answer to Ron's question, to a degree, I wish I knew what worked, because if we did, we'd put the money in those doggone programs.

I think sometimes it's people who work. Jaime Escalante ??? and "Stand and Deliver," for example, and, you know, other--teaching physics, and people like that, and it's not the program itself. But if we could identify the exact programs which work and put our money into it, that would help. So I think that whole business of better understanding of what works and not just what some group's gotten money for 30 years, is something we have to do in this country, and hopefully we're going to do that with good scientifically-based research now, which we've never had before.

MR. HASKINS: Right here.

QUESTION: Hi. Libby Doggett, Pre-K Now. I think you're really on to something, that it is the people that make it work, and I guess everybody in this room would agree that your bill for Head Start is really a good step forward.

The concern that I've heard mostly out in the early childhood field, and I'd like the governor to comment on this also, is that there's not money to pay the teachers the salary. When we get half the Head Start teachers to have a BA degree, which we all want, there's not going to be the salary, so those people are going to go to the public schools, go teach kindergarten, go teach first grade, and Head Start is just going to be a training ground and as soon as they have their BA degree, they're going to go on and we all think it's a, you know, a real disaster because you have No Child Left Behind calling for highly-qualified teachers, which we all support.

We want highly-qualified teachers for Head Start, we support that, but you've got to have the salaries. Thank you.

REPRESENTATIVE CASTLE: Well, you've got to be careful who's in the audience when you ask these questions. Libby's married to a member of Congress,

and we've talked often about these issues, and I agree. I agree with her statement, without taking a long time. I mean, obviously, I think what you're saying is fundamentally correct in terms of what we have to do.

GOVERNOR WARNER: And I would echo it. I mean, with a little initiative in Virginia on the private side, where we, you know, try to support it privately, an interesting model, where you try to incentivize that child-care worker, that pre-school worker to go back and get additional education, you get it supported by their current employer, you find a way to bring in the current employer to have a stake.

Part of this again goes to once you provide that training, and that additional support, how do you keep them? One of the things we're trying in Virginia, and this is fairly out there, but, you know, in the public school realm, and again this room all knows this--we always wonder why our underperforming schools continue to be underperforming.

Well, I think one of the main reasons is we put the least experienced, oftentimes least-qualified teacher, and then if they get experience they get lured away even from the more affluent suburban division.

We've started now paying a \$15,000 bonus for qualified teachers who've got experience, are doing well, going into hard-to-staff schools, underperforming schools, staying for a minimum of three years, and then I'll pay a bonus on top of that to those teachers who will improve the quality and improve the scores in that school.. So it's not getting the incumbents against the new folks coming in.

We've seen a decline in one school division of 50 percent of the--we had about a 50 percent attrition rate. It's down to about 10 percent. So part of that, though,

comes back to the earlier one about you've got to have metrics, you've got to have measurement. Too much of the education stuff is still too squishy. As a former business guy, we've got to find ways to measure, so we can make--so policy makers who want to advocate for this have got the ammunition we need.

REPRESENTATIVE CASTLE: Let me be more specific, in a way, Libby, because in the bill, it requires all new Head Start teachers to have at least an associate's degree in early childhood education, a related field. Within three years, have 50 percent of Head Start teachers nationwide to have at least a bachelor's degree, and actually it goes up a little bit from there.

And your question specifically was, you know, wouldn't we have to pay, have more money, and the answer is yes. There's no way in the world you can continue to pay Head Start teachers at a salary much lower than what somebody could get with a two- or four-year degree, particularly in the teaching field, some place else. Yes. We will have to do that. Congress will have to live up to that responsibility.

My earlier answer to Ron's question was it's going to be hard to get these programs much more than cost of living, but that is something that is going to have to be met.

And I must say--this is apart from that--but I talked to--Wendy Kopp runs Teach for America, and you may know that program. I think they hire 2,000 teachers a year around the country for the very best us. Some of you may have actually worked in that program. I'm talking about Ivy League schools or whatever; the fourth biggest hire of kids coming out of college today. I think 20 percent of Yale's graduating class

applied for this, for example, and this is really--well, they hire 2000 and they don't hire something like 14,000.

I want somebody to go along and hire those other 12,000 of the 14,000 they're not hiring. These are some of the brightest kids in the country.

I'm just saying there's a heck of a lot of people out there who really want to help kids and teach. We need to develop programs that'll encourage them to come forward. That's one that has. You know, we've got to keep being creative about bringing good people into teaching.

MR. HASKINS: In the back there.

QUESTION: Thank you. My name's Miriam Rollin. I'm with Fight Crime, Invest In Kids, and I want to compliment both of our speakers today on the role that they've played in expanding quality early childhood education, especially for at-risk kids. The research does clearly show that that can make a difference, not only for educational outcomes, but obviously reducing crime down the road as well.

Actually, in response to the comments from both of you about does anyone know about what might work in terms of particularly getting parents, and getting to kids even earlier, before pre-K, I just wanted to draw your attention, there's a wonderful model called the Nurse-Family Partnership, in what we call in-home parent coaching or home visiting, that can help bring parents resources about how can they parent effectively, how can they help their child's development.

That particular model is targeted at low-income individuals. That's been shown to not only have educational benefits but also reduce childhood abuse and neglect by 80 percent within two years, to reduce later delinquency by half.

So I just commend to you that model and actually, Representative Castle, there's a bill that was just introduced in late July that will be in your committee to try and provide some new resources. There is no designated funding stream for that type of effort of doing exactly what you say, reaching parents, helping them to do the job that they need to do in raising their kids well.

REPRESENTATIVE CASTLE: Happy to look at it.

GOVERNOR WARNER: Yeah. I'd like to see it too.

MR. HASKINS: Oh, those are short answers. Let's try to match those short answers with short questions. Yes? In the back.

QUESTION: Thank you. I do have a question. Congressman Castle, I do want to express appreciation for your work with the Institute of Education Sciences. Some of us are familiar with it.

I'm Jerry Sroufe from the American Educational Research Association. My question is, Congressman Castle, do you have an opinion about the national reporting system of Head Start, which I understand will be an issue when the Senate takes up the bill. Thank you.

REPRESENTATIVE CASTLE: Well, yeah, there's been a report on Head Start--if I had the right report card, correct me if I don't--but is that the report that-- I'm getting a head shake no. Right. I'm not that familiar with the report card but let me just say I'm for any good assessment. I think that's a vital part of it. It's another reason I like No Child Left Behind. There's an assessment. A lot of teachers don't like it, they object that there's too many tests going on, and the students aren't ready for this, or

whatever. I think you need it. I certainly needed it, just to get me motivated when I was in school.

But I think it basically helps judge what we are doing, and so I think we could use a good assessment of Head Start.

Frankly, there are good Head Start programs and there are not-so-good Head Start programs. About a dozen of them in the last year have had financial problems. We worry about paying teachers more. Libby, there was a case in, I don't know, Kansas City or some doggone place, where the guy running the Head Start program was getting paid \$265,000 a year and had a Mercedes rental, or something of that nature, which I thought was a little bit extravagant, and there are a few more like that. And so we need to look at it from a financial point of view as well.

But the bottom line is without a lot of knowledge, I'm for the assessment aspect of it.

MR. HASKINS: Last question.

QUESTION: Hi. I'm Ben Allen from the National Head Start Association.

REPRESENTATIVE CASTLE: See, I worry about who's in these audiences when I start talking like this. Be kind now.

MR. HASKINS: Hey, what can he do? Look how far away he is. Don't have anything to worry about.

REPRESENTATIVE CASTLE: He has a microphone. He can throw it at me.

QUESTION: The National Head Start Association appreciates working with your committee in working on the Head Start bill over the past year. We want to thank you and the rest of the committee for working on that.

I have a question, though. I think everybody here agrees on the importance of parental involvement in education. Well, the question I have is that Congressman Mark Souder, a Republican from Indiana, introduced an amendment on the House floor to restore the amount of parental authority that parents can have within a Head Start program. I was wondering why the committee did not. . .

REPRESENTATIVE CASTLE: Why we opposed it.

QUESTION: Why you opposed it. Yes.

REPRESENTATIVE CASTLE: We oppose it and I do oppose it, personally, frankly. We opposed it because we believe that each of the Head Starts should be run by a governing board, as they are now, and I think typically that--and I know the ones in Delaware--they typically are professionally done, people of differing backgrounds, whatever. The parental groups are organized in the bill and in Head Start programs now, as you know better than I, and they do have an opinion, and they do a perfectly good job.

But I don't think they should be managing the Head Starts. I'll give you a good example. Our PTAs have parents involved but they may be involved for particular reasons, and it may not be holistic in terms of running the operation or understanding what other kids need, or whatever it may be.

They may be there because they're trying to worry about what their kid's doing in reading or sports or whatever it may be.

So I think the structure that they have now works, actually, perfectly fine. I was a little surprised at Mark's amendment because I felt that that was not really an issue heretofore, and so it caught me a little off-guard when it came up. But I do feel that the present structure works.

I'm more than willing to discuss it. And I do like parental involvement with the kids; don't get me wrong. It's just the management, the Head Start aspect of it, which concerned me.

QUESTION: We support the present structure and that's what his amendment would do, with the caveat that if there are any financial irregularities, that then the governing board would then step in and take over.

So basically the bill would restore it to what it currently is, with the caveat that, if there are any financial irregularities, then professionals would come in and would fix the problem.

REPRESENTATIVE CASTLE: Well, the war is not over yet, as you know. It's got to go through the Senate, and back and forth on it.

MR. HASKINS: I'd like to thank members of the audience for coming and please join me in giving a round of applause to our guests.