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## Proposed Funding Cuts to Head Start Surprise Programs' Leaders, Raise Questions about Long Term Impacts

**Sacramento, CA** – This week the U.S. House of Representatives will vote on a plan to cut 200,000 of the most at-risk children across the country from Head Start classrooms. H.R. 1, a budget proposal for the remaining seven months of fiscal year 2011, represents an unprecedented cut to a program that has historically received bipartisan support.

“This proposal from the Republican leadership was a shock – none of the rank and file House Members when we have spoken with recently thought that Head Start would be placed on the chopping block,” says Rick Mockler, Executive Director of the California Head Start Association.

The proposed cuts would reduce Head Start funding by over 20%. If these cuts are enacted, in California **27,000** children and their families will be dropped from Head Start’s education, health, and support service programs. An estimated **6,000** California staff members will lose their jobs. This comes in the midst of California’s state budget woes, where thousands of working families may soon also be losing child care services, creating a domino effect of endangering their own ability to work.

“Head Start has demonstrated its cost effectiveness on just about every report card. Studies have found that children who have participated in Head Start are more likely to be ready for school, less likely to need costly special education services, less likely to repeat a grade, less likely to commit a crime, and are far more likely to graduate from high school,” according to Mockler, who argued that the long term fiscal impact of cutting Head Start would be severe.

Investing in early childhood education generates a 7% to 10% return on investment each year, according to Nobel Laureate economist James Heckman. “Investing in early childhood education is a cost-effective strategy – even during a budget crisis.” That is a greater return than nearly any other government service.

“I don’t know what is going on in the House right now, but if I were in a pre-school classroom, I’d suggest a time out,” said Mockler. “I understand that the federal deficit is serious, but that doesn’t mean we should go into panic mode. Let’s all take a deep breath and remind ourselves why we budget in the first place – it’s for our children and to make the future better, isn’t it?”

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Links to research on Head Start: [http://www.nhsa.org/research/research\\_bites](http://www.nhsa.org/research/research_bites)