

**National Association for the Education of Young Children**

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August 15, 2014

The Honorable Tom Harkin  
Chairman, Committee on Health, Education, Labor & Pensions  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 201510

Dear Senator Harkin:

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) is the nation's largest association of early childhood education professionals and a leading voice on quality teaching in early childhood programs and schools serving children from birth through third grade. NAEYC's national standards for the preparation of early childhood professionals (working with children from birth through age 8) is used in higher education accreditation and other recognition to advance a high-quality teaching workforce in schools as well as other early childhood education settings. We are pleased to submit comments on your draft reauthorization of the Higher Education Act.

*Financial Assistance*

Early childhood educators and administrators are increasingly obtaining postsecondary degrees. A significant portion of early childhood teachers are enrolled in postsecondary programs while they work. We are pleased to read your proposal to provide year-round use of the Pell Grant and to maintain the Perkins and Public Service loan forgiveness programs for early childhood educators. We are concerned, however, that the ten-year period for the Public Service Loan Forgiveness program is too long for a poorly compensated field and recommend a much shorter period that would demonstrate commitment to the field but recognize that an earlier start to the forgiveness or cancellation of the loan would aid in the retention of high-quality teachers in child care and Head Start.

*Teacher Preparation*

Teacher Quality Partnerships -- We are pleased to see a continuing commitment to high-quality teacher preparation, including residencies and induction programs to support new teachers, in the Educator Quality Partnership grants, formerly the Teacher Quality Partnerships. Grantees are required to use the funds to improve all of the teacher preparation programs and we appreciate language on early childhood partners as well as schools as appropriate. We urge the next version of the bill to include licensed/regulated child care and Head Start programs among the settings in which early childhood educators can be placed for the residency and induction program in addition to a school setting.

New Rating of Teacher Preparation Programs - While we value accountability for programs that prepare teachers, we do have serious concerns about Title II Part B, an accountability system that rates teacher

preparation programs in part using child test scores (such as value-added measures). Both the American Statistical Association and the American Educational Research Association have raised concerns about using value-added measures to determine the effectiveness of teachers and teacher preparation programs. We believe other ways to consider improvements in teacher preparation and accountability should be considered in lieu of this proposal.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide comments to this draft.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Rhian Evans Allvin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "R" and "E".

Rhian Evans Allvin  
Executive Director