

The Long and Winding Road: Head Start Reauthorization So Far

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Presentation Overview

- What has happened so far in the legislative process
- Overview of the final House bill
- Overview of the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee bill
- How similar or different are the bills?
- How do key features of the bills compare?
 - State role, conditions for grantees to keep funding, teacher education, child outcomes...
- What might happen next?

What Happened So Far?

- Administration framed the debate early in 2003 with two priorities: improving school readiness of children and coordination with other state early education programs
 - Released a brief document stating overall goals
 - Big new idea was to allow states the option to govern Head Start funds
- The House Education and Workforce committee developed, debated, and finally passed a bill on a party line vote in June
 - The bill changed significantly between first introduction in May and passage out of committee, including limiting the scope of the controversial demonstration block grant proposal
- The House passed a bill by one vote in July, with no Democrats supporting it

So Far? (cont'd)

- Within one week of passage in the House, two different bills filed in Senate:
 - Senator Alexander (R-TN), Centers of Excellence Model
 - Senators Dodd (D-CT) and Kennedy (D-MA), with Coordination councils in all 50 states, full funding, teacher qualifications, etc.
- The Senate HELP committee deliberated mostly behind closed doors
 - A holding place draft bill was released in October
 - On October 29th, Committee marked up a bill
 - Senators Bingaman and Clinton said they wanted to add more changes with regard to the National Reporting System, and how child outcomes and assessment are treated in the bill
 - The committee voted 21-0 to pass the bill from committee
 - Final HELP bill filed by Senator Gregg (R-NH) on November 24th
 - More changes could occur before the bill is voted on in Senate

Overview of the House Final Bill: Title I

- Authorizes less funding over the next 5 years than necessary to keep pace with inflation
- Authorizes the Secretary to develop new educational standards
- Requires programs to set and meet goals to keep funds, makes it more likely current grantees have to compete
- Increases required teacher formal education
- Expands the tasks of state collaboration offices, and requires certain entities to involve in strategic planning
- Reduces proportion of funds used for training and technical assistance, and requires the Secretary to establish a state based TA system
- Allows faith-based programs receiving Head Start funds to discriminate in employment based on religion

House Title II Overview (cont'd)

- Allows up to 8 states to govern Head Start funds
- States must:
 - Provide services, for same # of children as serving in base year, “at least as extensive” as those described in Section 641A of law, but not a clear reference to the Performance Standards, which are in regulation
 - Assure parental choice of preschool
 - Maintain state funding levels, but the bill does not contain specific reporting provisions
 - Match 5% of state Head Start allotment
 - Establish collaboration effort to integrate with prek, Even Start, Title I preschool, and Early Reading First
- The Secretary would be required to fund an independent evaluation

What are the State Criteria?

- To be approved, a state would have to demonstrate that it had:
 - An existing state supported system providing public prekindergarten services to children prior to entry into kindergarten
 - Implemented standards for school readiness that include standards for language, prereading, and premathematics development for prekindergarten that are aligned with state K-12 academic content standards
 - State and locally appropriated funds for prekindergarten programs and Head Start of not less than 50 percent of federal funds that received under Head Start in the prior fiscal year
 - Established a means for inter-agency coordination and collaboration in the development of its state plan
- Unclear how this fits with provision that applications would be deemed approved unless the Secretary makes a written determination otherwise within reasonable time

How Would Current Grantees Fare?

- Current local grantees in a state with a demo would continue to receive funding for 60 months under the terms of the current award, unless:
 - The program has substantial uncorrected deficiencies on monitoring reports during any year of the most recent 5 year period; OR,
 - Has been determined by the state as not in compliance with the state plan

Overview of the Senate HELP Bill

- Authorizes \$400 million increase per year for three years, such sums as necessary after that
- Requires Secretary to develop new education standards based on NAS review of specific list of child outcomes
- Increases education requirements for staff
- Requires governors to establish Advisory Councils and expand collaboration office role
- Increases eligibility to 130% of poverty
- Changes expansion formula for new \$
- Limits grants to 5 years, then requires programs to meet new conditions; changes conditions for funding
- Increases authorization for Early Head Start set-aside
- Creates centers of excellence bonuses
- Authorize regional OR state TA system

How Similar or Different are the Bills?

- Both bills share similar overarching goals:
 - Focus on “school readiness,” child outcomes, setting and measuring goals
 - Increased state role
 - More difficult to keep Head Start funding
 - Higher teacher education requirements
 - Attention to certain populations, e.g. homeless children, children in child welfare, limited English proficient children
 - Only incremental increases in authorized funding

Similar or Different? (cont'd)

- Despite similar goals, there are many clear differences, both large and small, in the details of these bills
- Some provisions are in one bill, and not at all in the other
- Other differences are more subtle, getting at similar goals in different ways, or with tweaks in the Senate bill that expand on House provisions

Which One Is Not in the Other? Examples...

House H.R.2210	Senate 1940
Block grants to 8 states	Not in the bill
Allow discrimination based on religion	Not in the bill
Not in the bill; Limit percentage of children over income limit to 10%	Raise eligibility to 130% of poverty
Not in the bill	Limit any expansion funding available to go to states with fewer children served (65%) and open competition (35%)

Which One is Not in the Other? (cont'd)

H.R. 2210	Senate 1940
Not in the bill	Rewards “centers of excellence”
Not in the bill	Limits wages so that not staff be compensated at levels higher than the Secretary
Not in the bill	Changes prohibition on political activity using Head Start funds to apply to individuals employed by or assigned to programs
Not in the bill	Sets Indian funds no less than 4%, migrant 5%; provides grant program to Tribal colleges

Differences: State Role

■ The House would:

- Authorize up to 8 demonstration grants
- Expand the role of the collaboration office
- Require state-based systems of TA

■ The Senate HELP bill would:

- Expand the role of the collaboration office and require governors to establish advisory councils on ECE from birth to school entry
- Give the Secretary discretion for state or regional TA
- Involve governors in nominating “centers of excellence”
- Seem to signal greater involvement of governors in approving new grantees in their state (unclear from current language)

More Subtle Difference Examples:

Conditions for Funding

■ The House would:

- Require programs to establish goals for educational instruction and provision of comprehensive services
- Require programs to meet these goals as a condition of receiving future funding
- To maintain priority status, require programs to “fulfill” program and financial requirements

■ The Senate HELP bill would:

- Require new conditions to receive funding after 5 years
- Require programs to establish goals for improving school readiness of children (including the new educational standards)
- Require programs to show they had met or were making progress toward these goals to maintain funding
- To win priority status, a program would have to meet an undefined standard of being “high-performing” and other specific conditions

School Readiness Outcomes

- The House would:
 - Replace current list of educational standards with general categories, and give the Secretary authority to create new standards
 - Require the Secretary to contract with NAS to make recommendations on appropriate academic requirements and assessment for improving instruction, services, and program quality
- The Senate HELP bill would:
 - Replace current list with very specific skills and knowledge standards, and require the Secretary to contract with NAS to review the standards and make recommendations within one year, and to create new standards “based on” those recommendations
 - Prohibit the Secretary from implementing standards until then

Teacher Qualifications

- The House would:
 - Require 50% of all center-based teachers have a BA in ECE or related field by September 2008
 - All new teachers hires have an AA in ECE or related field within three years of enactment of the bill
- The Senate HELP bill would:
 - Require 50% of teachers in EACH center have a BA in ECE or related field by September 2010
 - Require all teachers have an AA by September 2009
 - Require curriculum specialists to have a BA by 2007
 - Require teaching assistants to have a CDA by 2007, or be enrolled in a program to have one in two years
 - Require Early Head Start teachers have at least a CDA or an AA by September 30, 2009

What May Happen Next?

- Latest information is that a bill could come to the floor as early as mid to late March
 - Many other bills waiting
 - Election year politics are uncertain
 - Senate leaders could agree to bill changes before it comes to the floor
- More attention is growing on the new Head Start National Reporting System assessment of all 4-year olds, and it is expected that there will be Senate floor debate over whether to halt the current process for further review
- Concerns are growing about conference committee process, given experience with other bills
 - Conference committees can pick and choose from both bills

For More Details:

- See the CLASP website for analyses of the House and Senate bills, at www.clasp.org/Pubs/Pubs_ChildCare:
- *Head Start Reauthorization: A Section-by-Section Analysis of the Senate HELP Committee Bill (S.1940)*
- *A Preliminary Analysis of H.R.2210, The School Readiness Act of 2003*
- *Still Headed in the Wrong Direction*