



Head Start Rally in Washington DC Draws Enormous Crowd



Near the steps of the Capitol on Wednesday, September 27, 2017, hundreds of people gathered for the “Families Unite for Head Start Spirit Rally.” Many were parents or Head Start employees who came from all over the United States, including California, Texas, Arizona, Florida, New York, and elsewhere. Virtually every state in the Union was represented.

The National Head Start Association organized the rally and set up 300 visits to congressional leaders later that day with the goal of encouraging lawmakers to increase funding for Head Start programs.



U.S. Representative Suzanne Bonamici (D-OR)

Several house representatives and a U.S. senator were on hand to speak, including U.S. Rep. Charlie Christ (D-FL) and U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley (D-

OR). Their powerful speeches excited the enthusiastic crowd.

Senator Merkley talked about the importance of fighting for expansion of funding. “Just a week ago there was a bill on the senate floor to increase military spending by 80 billion dollars,” he said. “What would be the impact to



U.S. Senator Jeff Merkley (D-OR)

Head Start and Early Head Start if we increased funding by a few billion dollars?” Senator Merkley then asked the crowd to think of all the returns that would come back to society if the nation invested in helping all children thrive and succeed. He said, “Generations to come would feel the positive effects.”



Hector Banuelos –Head Start Parent from LA

Lawmakers weren't the only ones taking the stage to energize the crowd, numerous Head Start parents spoke as well. Hector Banuelos from Los Angeles (a father of six) told a heartwarming story about how Head Start made a positive difference in his life and the life of his children. Banuelos admitted that he was ill-prepared to be a parent, but Head Start gave him the tools needed to flourish. “If you are a parent,” said Banuelos, “and you take advantage of every program

they have, you will become a successful parent.”

Banuelos also said, “Before you can take care of others, you have to take care of yourself first.”

That is a concept that Head Start believes in. And they are committed to their work, giving every child, regardless of circumstances at birth, an opportunity to succeed in school and in life. In the 50 years since its inception, Head Start has improved the lives of more than 32 million children and families. The Community Action Partnership stands proudly beside them in support of everything they do.



[U.S. Senator Jeff Merkley](#) video from the rally (45 sec)

[U.S. Congressman Charlie Christ's](#) video from the rally (51 sec)

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