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Head Start merits increased funding

According to a recent UNICEF report entitled, “The Children Left Behind,” the United States ranks at the bottom of the world’s 24 richest countries when measuring inequality in well-being among children. This should be yet another wake-up call to our elected officials about the future of America’s children.

Much will be riding on how Congress decides to appropriate funds for education, health and family-support services for our nation’s most vulnerable.

Some question the value of maintaining current funding levels for Head Start, a 45-year-old national commitment that pioneered early learning and whole-family approaches that lead to lifelong success.

Many longitudinal studies show that Head Start works. Head Start children graduate from high school, attend college, lead healthy lifestyles, actively participate in nuclear and extended families, compete and succeed in the workplace, and are accomplished professionals who give back to their communities.

Unfortunately, only 40 percent of 3- and 4-year-olds and four percent of babies and toddlers living in poverty are served by Head Start.

I urge policy makers to do the right thing for children and vote to maintain and increase funding for Head Start. That will positively lift our children out of last place and place them on a path to success.

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