

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate Release

Wednesday, March 21, 2007

Contact: Pepi Nieva (808) 225-1219

**House Committee adds \$450 million for Head Start and suspends
preschool testing**

*Congresswoman Mazie Hirono opposes standardized tests for very young
children*

In an interview with National Public Radio yesterday, Congresswoman Mazie K. Hirono expressed her opposition to the use of testing for three to four-year-olds attending federally supported Head Start preschools, stating that the test is burdensome, not reliable, and not being used to increase the quality of services.

“It doesn’t make sense to think that a program like Head Start, which provides comprehensive services to children who would otherwise not be able to go to preschools, could be effectively evaluated by a standardized test,” Hirono said. “Head Start is already assessed in multiple ways and the National Reporting System is redundant and ineffective.”

Congresswoman Hirono explained that 10,000 more children will be able to attend preschool with the additional \$450 million authorized by the House Committee on Education and Labor, a committee of which she is a member. The new money will also help increase the quality of the program, including increasing teacher salaries. We know that preschool experience sets the stage for ongoing school success, which makes paying higher salaries of critical importance in attracting the best teachers.

###