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June 12, 2008

Representative Mazie Hirono  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Hirono:

On behalf of the National Education Association's (NEA) 3.2 million members, we would like to express our support for the Providing Resources Early for Kids (PRE-K) Act (H.R. 3289). We thank you for your leadership in introducing this important legislation to help states enhance the quality of their pre-k programs.

NEA believes that children's learning begins well before they enter school, and that the transition to school must be founded on strong school readiness. Research shows that quality early childhood education is a key predictor of a child's future educational achievement and emotional development. Children need proper stimulation and education from birth through age six in order to ensure full development and adequate preparation for the rigors of school.

Given the importance of high-quality early childhood learning opportunities, we are pleased that your bill would give states the flexibility to use funds for a variety of strategies designed to enhance pre-k programs. For example, states could direct funds authorized under the bill to increase the number of trained early childhood educators, improve student-to-teacher ratios in preschools, provide vital comprehensive services such as health screenings and nutritional assistance, increase the hours per day and weeks per year families have access to high quality early education programs, and/or improve early education programs serving the youngest children.

Again, we thank you for your leadership and look forward to continuing to work with you on these very important issues.

Sincerely,

Diane Shust  
Director of Government Relations

Randall Moody  
Manager of Federal Advocacy