



**COUNTY OF LAKE
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

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May 6, 2025

The Honorable Mike Thompson
U.S. House of Representatives
268 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

RE: OPPOSE – Proposed Defunding of Head Start

Dear Congressman Thompson:

As you are aware, North Coast Opportunities, Inc., Head Start Child Development Program has been a cornerstone of early childhood education in rural Northern California since 1968, serving approximately 100 children and families annually across Lake County. As a community-based nonprofit, it plays a vital role in providing high-quality early learning experiences and family support. Local programs providing critical Head Start services in Lake County also include the Lake Family Resource Center Early Head Start (*serving 74 children and employing 22 staff*), and the Kelseyville “E Center.” Together, these programs offer an additional 108 slots, increasing access to essential early childhood education for families in the region.

Head Start is an essential resource for early childhood development, particularly in rural regions such as ours where access to quality educational opportunities, healthcare, and social services can be scarce. By providing comprehensive support to the whole family, including early education, health screenings, and family services, Head Start ensures children from low-income families and other families identified as in-need are prepared for academic success and equipped with the tools they need to thrive.

For many families in rural areas, Head Start is the first and only opportunity for their children to receive formal early education. These programs help bridge gaps created by geographical isolation and limited resources, offering services that would otherwise be out of reach. In addition to educational benefits, Head Start supports the physical, emotional, and social development of children, which is critical for lifelong success.

According to the National Head Start Association, children who attend Head Start are:

- 12% less likely to live in poverty and 29% less likely to receive public assistance as adults;
- More likely to complete high school and higher education;
- Less likely to be arrested;
- Less likely to enter foster care; and
- Less likely to experience poor health.

These are not just statistics; these are a real reflection of outcomes for children in our communities.

It is absolutely critical that Head Start is not defunded. Any reduction in funding would have devastating and far-reaching consequences for the hundreds of families and children served. Defunding Head Start would eliminate a vital safety net for some of the most vulnerable populations in our region, jeopardizing children's futures, forcing parents and Head Start staff out of the workforce, and increasing the burden on already strained social systems. The reduction of Head Start dollars flowing into the community for essential materials, equipment, and services will lead to significant economic setbacks.

We appreciate your enduring understanding and support of Head Start and other critical programs that seek to provide upstream supports that make a difference for Americans at every stage of life. In continuity of those considerable efforts, do not allow Head Start to be defunded. The cost is far too great. Defunding would dismantle the support system thousands of families in our communities rely on, and threaten the futures of children who deserve every opportunity to succeed.

This is a moment that calls for leadership and decisive action. We ask you to stand with us, with our families, and with our children, and our communities by protecting and fully funding Head Start. The future of our communities and our future generations depends on your support.

Respectfully,

Chair
Lake County Board of Supervisors
COUNTY OF LAKE

Cc: Honorable Senator Adam Schiff; Honorable Senator Alex Padilla; Honorable California State Senate President pro Tempore, Mike McGuire; Honorable Assembly Majority Leader, Cecilia Aguiar-Curry