



Berkeley City Council

CONSENT CALENDAR
December 17, 2013

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
From: Councilmembers Laurie Capitelli and Darryl Moore
Subject: Support the Strong Start for America’s Children Act of 2013.

RECOMMENDATION

1. Adopt a resolution supporting Strong Start for America's Children Act of 2013 that would expand access to high-quality early childhood education for children ages 0-5; and 2. Request the City Clerk’s office write a letter on behalf of the Berkeley City Council to our United States Senators and copy to Arne Duncan, US Secretary of Education, in support of the Strong Start for Children Act of 2013.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Staff time to write the letter.

BACKGROUND

Building on the framework presented in President Obama’s 2013 State of the Union address, this proposal is a 10-year initiative to expand and improve early learning opportunities for children 0 – 5 and allow the children most in need of support to enroll in programs that build skills needed to close the achievement gap.

The bill would fund:

- Expanded access to quality volunteer preschool for 4 year olds for families below 200% of the federal poverty line through federal-state partnerships and state matching systems.
- Allow states to use 15% of their pre-K funding to provide high quality child care for infants and toddlers
- Give early Head Start programs the ability to reach more eligible children through partnerships with child care programs to improve quality.
- Expand home-visiting programs that have been shown to have a range of positive impacts on parenting.

Current neurological and educational research overwhelmingly shows that children who have quality early learning and family support are ready to learn when they enter kindergarten and better prepared to meet the challenges of school and life. Support for this legislation is an additional step in this City's commitment to address educational inequities among our citizens.

More information about the Strong Start for America's Children Act of 2013 can be found at:

<http://democrats.edworkforce.house.gov/blog/strong-start-americas-children-act-bill-summary>

CONTACT PERSON

Councilmember Laurie Capitelli, District 5 510-981-7150

Councilmember Darryl Moore, District 2 510-981-7120

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Resolution "In Support of the Strong Start for America's Children Act of 2013"
2. Template of letter to Senators Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Boxer.

RESOLUTION NO. ##,###-N.S.

IN SUPPORT OF THE STRONG START FOR AMERICA'S CHILDREN ACT OF 2013

WHEREAS, *Strong Start for America's Children Act of 2013*, recently introduced in Washington by Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA), and Representatives Richard Hanna (R-NY) and George Miller (D-Contra Costa County); and

WHEREAS, this bipartisan legislation will expand high-quality early childhood education for children ages 0-5 in a variety of ways; and

WHEREAS, the legislation will expand access to quality voluntary preschool for 4 year olds from families below 200% of the federal poverty line through a federal-state partnership and state matching system over the next 10 years; and

WHEREAS, it will allow states to use 15% of their pre-k funding to provide high-quality child care settings for infants and toddlers to help prevent the learning gap and ensure they are on-track when they get to pre-k; and

WHEREAS, it will give Early Head Start programs the ability to reach more eligible children through partnerships with child care programs to improve quality; and

WHEREAS, and it will expand evidence-based home visiting programs that have been shown to have a range of positive impacts on parenting; and

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Berkeley that the Council supports the *Strong Start for America's Children Act of 2013 which will increase access to quality early childhood education.*

Dear Senator Boxer,

The Mayor and Council of the City of Berkeley respectfully ask you to support high-quality early learning opportunities for children by co-sponsoring the Strong Start for America's Children Act. We also request that you support a final budget that ends the sequester and includes significant new investments in early learning.

To ensure school success we need to improve and expand educational resources and supports for our youngest learners and their families. When infant and toddlers get a strong start, our nation prospers. Learning happens from the start, and so should our investments in our children.

Thank you for your consideration.

The Berkeley City Council

CC: Arne Duncan, US Secretary of Education