



THE EARLY CHILDHOOD INVESTMENT CORPORATION

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SEPTEMBER 9, 2009

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The following memo provides a summary of public policy issues of interest to Early Childhood Advocates.

Today is a busy day in Washington with Congress back in session; Senator Max Baucus' (D-MT) announcement that he will move forward with the introduction of a "Chairman's Mark" next week of a health care reform bill followed by the Finance Committee's mark-up of the legislation the week of September 21st; the announcement that Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA) will become the new Chairman of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee; and President Obama poised to deliver a major speech on health care reform this evening.

Needless to say that Congress has returned from the August recess and hit the ground running...

Health Care Reform

Throughout the August recess, reports continued about ongoing health care reform negotiations between the "Gang of Six" – the bipartisan group from the Senate Finance Committee negotiating on health care reform legislation including Senators Max Baucus (D-MT), Kent Conrad (D-ND), Jeff Bingaman, (D-NM), Charles Grassley (R-IA), Mike Enzi (R-WY) and Olympia Snowe (R-ME). These discussions led to Sen. Baucus' release yesterday of a framework of a plan for consideration by the bipartisan group. Additionally, it was reported that Senator Baucus gave the Gang of Six until 10:00 a.m. this morning to submit additional ideas and comments to his proposed compromise bill.

Despite these signs that time was running out for the Gang of Six to come to an agreement, D.C. pundits and advocates were taken by surprise when Senator Baucus announced this afternoon that, "The time has come for action and we will act. We must move forward if we are going to get this bill done by the end of the year...We

have spent many weeks and months on this crucial issue. Now is the time to move forward.”

Notably, Senator Baucus’ Framework for Comprehensive Reform includes the following language of interest to early childhood advocates:

Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Visitation. The proposal would provide funding to states, tribes, and territories to develop and implement one or more evidence-based Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Visitation model(s). Model options would be targeted at reducing infant and maternal mortality and its related causes by producing improvements in prenatal, maternal, and newborn health, child health and development, parenting skills, school readiness, juvenile delinquency, and family economic self-sufficiency.

With the release of Senator Baucus’ full Mark expected shortly, we will gain a better perspective of the context and actual home visitation language contained in the Senate health reform bill.

On the other side of Capitol Hill, we reported prior to the August recess that an agreement was reached in the House Energy and Commerce Committee on its portion of a health care reform bill allowing the Committee to pass a bill on July 31, 2009. It was the last of three House committees required to pass a bill before a single bill goes to the full chamber for a vote. Work continues by Democratic leaders and the Chairs of these three committees— Education and Labor, Ways and Means and Energy and Commerce — to resolve differences in the three different versions of the bill— so that the full House can vote on a merged bill.

BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS

Prior to the August recess, the Senate Appropriations Committee marked up the FY 2010 Labor, Health and Human Services and Education (LHHS) Appropriations Act on July 30, 2009. With the House having already passed its version of the FY 2010 LHHS bill, progress on the FY 2010 LHHS bill now depends on when the full Senate will move to vote on the bill. September, however, is expected to yield little progress on the bill due to a shortened legislative calendar and competing priorities for other appropriations bills to pass. Therefore, expectation is that a Continuing Resolution will be passed to provide additional time for consideration of several appropriations bills, and as a result, action on early childhood education appropriations issues is not likely to be seen before October of this year.

SENATE HELP COMMITTEE CHAIRMANSHIP

At the weekly Senate Democratic caucus lunch earlier today, Senator Christopher Dodd (D-CT) announced that he will retain his chairmanship of the Senate Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs Committee. Senator Dodd has been acting as a stand-in for the late Senator Ted Kennedy (D-MA) during the health reform debate, so much speculation has occurred over the past few weeks as to whether or not he would assume the full

chairmanship of the HELP Committee. As a result of Senator Dodd's decision to remain at the helm of the Senate Banking Committee, the new chairman of the Senate HELP Committee will be Senator Harkin (D-IA) who has relinquished his chairmanship of the Senate Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Committee. This will prompt Senator Blanche Lincoln (D-AR) to take control of the Senate Agriculture Committee. As the current Chairman of the Senate Labor, Health and Human Services and Education Appropriations Subcommittee, Senator Harkin assumes the chairmanship with a vast knowledge of the issues under the jurisdiction of the HELP Committee. We will be following this transition closely and its impact on the health reform debate.

LEGISLATION INTRODUCED THIS WEEK

- 1) H.R. 3533 – This bill introduced by Rep. Burgess (R-TX) would amend the Consumer Product Safety Act to clarify and ensure the effective implementation of certain children's product safety provisions added by the Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act of 2008. H.R. 3533 has been referred to the House Energy and Commerce Committee.