



U.S. Congressman
Nick Rahall
WORKING FOR WEST VIRGINIANS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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THURSDAY, OCTOBER 5, 1989

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RAHALL PUSHES FOR CHILD CARE PROGRAMS

WASHINGTON, D.C.-- Congressman Nick J. Rahall, II (D-WV), a member of the House Committee on Education and Labor, today urged his colleagues to support the establishment of a Federal child care policy that was drafted by his committee to provide more adequate child care for low-income individuals. To build upon this policy, he also urged the support of tax credit provisions drafted by the Ways and Means Committee. Both of these proposals were included in H.R. 3299, the Budget Reconciliation Bill for Fiscal Year 1990, which was overwhelmingly approved later in the day by a vote of 333-91.

"The country needs and wants the comprehensive approach to child care as provided in the Education and Labor Committee's proposal, and it welcomes the added benefits to low income families with dependent children provided through the tax credit, added by the Ways and Means Committee," said Rahall.

The child care provisions, originally known as H.R. 3, is the product of nearly three years of exhaustive hearings and intensive research by literally thousands of child care experts. The Bill was reported by the Education and Labor Committee with broad support from both Democrats and Republicans. It would provide for school-based before and after-school care for children of working parents, expand Head Start, and state start-up to increase day care opportunities for parents.

"It is well documented that every day, five thousand mothers turn down paid jobs because of a lack of adequate, affordable child care," proclaimed Rahall. "Every day two million children, from working families, spend another day alone and unsupervised, due to a lack of access to affordable child care. Every day, more than three million children are put at risk in unsafe day care arrangements. These child care program includes voluntary, not mandatory, standards for health and safety in child care, and offers incentives to states to see that these standards are met."

Rahall noted that these programs are especially important to West Virginia and particularly his constituents of the 4th District. In West Virginia over 125,000 mothers are in the work force, which is 15% of the entire working population. While in the 4th District, nearly 34,000 are a part of the work force, which is close to 18% of the work force in that area. These

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statistics show that child care is of major importance to the people of West Virginia.

Rahall also said that language in the Reconciliation Bill would provide tax credits to low-income families with children who are dependent. But Rahall wanted it to be clear, "Even though we do not oppose a tax credit that will be used, where necessary, for child care purposes, we must also have a well-structured program that does more than provide custodial care for young, pre-school children who need the education and developmental opportunities that are embraced under H.R. 3."

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WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Congressman Nick J. Rahall, D-W.V., a member of the House Committee on Education and Labor, today urged his colleagues to support the establishment of a Federal child care policy that was drafted by his committee to provide more adequate child care for low-income individuals. To build upon this policy, he also urged the support of tax credit provisions drafted by the Ways and Means Committee. Both of these proposals were included in H.R. 3298, the Budget Reconciliation Bill for Fiscal Year 1990, which was overwhelmingly approved later in the day by a vote of 333-91.

"The country needs and wants the comprehensive approach to child care as provided in the Education and Labor Committee's proposal, and it welcomes the added benefits for low income families with dependent children provided through the tax credit," said Rahall.

The child care provisions, originally known as H.R. 3, is the product of nearly three years of extensive hearings and intensive research by literally thousands of child care experts. The Bill was reported by the Education and Labor Committee with broad support from both Democrats and Republicans. It would provide for school-based before and after-school care for children of working parents, expand head start, and state start-up to increase day care opportunities for parents.

"It is well documented that every day, five thousand mothers turn down paid jobs because of a lack of adequate, affordable child care," proclaimed Rahall. "Every day two million children, from working families, spend another day alone and unsupervised, due to a lack of access to affordable child care. Every day more than three million children are put at risk in unsupervised care arrangements. These child care programs include voluntary, not mandatory, standards for health and safety in child care, and offers incentives to states to see that these standards are met."

Rahall noted that these programs are especially important to West Virginia and particularly his constituents of the 4th District. In West Virginia over 125,000 mothers are in the work force, which is 15% of the entire working population. While in the 4th District, nearly 34,000 are a part of the work force, which is close to 18% of the work force in that area. These

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FLOOR STATEMENT
HONORABLE NICK J. RAHALL, II (D-WV)
H.R. 3299, Budget Reconciliation, Child Care Provisions

Mr. Chairman, I rise in strong support of H.R. 3, the Education and Labor reported bill to provide for the establishment of a child care policy at the Federal level, and the tax credit provisions supplied by the Ways and Means Committee, both of which are included in H.R. 3299, the FY 1990 Budget Reconciliation bill. No substitute intended to be offered here today is adequate to the Nation's needs. The country needs and wants the comprehensive approach to child care as provided in the Education and Labor Committee's bill, and it welcomes the added benefits to low income families with dependent children provided through the tax credit provision added by the Ways and Means Committee.

H.R. 3, as reported by the Education and Labor Committee on which I serve, known as the Early Childhood Education and Development Act, is one of the most important domestic policy statements to come before the 101st Congress so far this year. It contains initiatives to help meet the desperate need of American parents for quality, accessible, affordable child care. H.R. 3 is the product of nearly three years of exhaustive hearings and intensive research by literally thousands of child care experts. Our bill was reported by the Education and Labor Committee with broad bipartisan support. The programs thereunder will improve the quality of programs for pre-school children by expanding the Head Start program to day-long, year-round services for those qualifying for Head Start. Title II of H.R. 3 provides for school-based before and after-school care for children of working parents. This will enable "latch-key" children to remain in a constructive, supervised educational setting until their parents return home from work, rather than going home to empty houses, into neighborhoods often

dangerous, often drug-ridden, and totally unsafe for young, impressionable and vulnerable children.

Title III of H.R. 3 provides money to the states to enable them to provide operating funds to existing, and to newly-interested child care providers, whether center based, family, or group homes, and would expand services to working families with infants and toddlers, a much more difficult child care service to find that is safe and affordable. This funding is intended to allow states to increase both the quantity and quality of available child care slots, making child care available to parents who seek it for children from infancy to school-age and beyond in safe, affordable settings.

It is well documented that every day, five thousand mothers turn down paid jobs because of a lack of adequate, affordable child care. Every day, two million children from working families spend another day alone and unsupervised, due to a lack of access to affordable child care. Every day, more than three million children are put at risk in unsafe day care arrangements.

H.R. 3 includes voluntary, not mandatory, standards for health and safety in child care, and offers incentives to states to see that these standards are met.

Members of the Education and Labor Committee have agreed with President Bush, that a tax credit for children of low income families for child care purposes is a desirable goal. But we did not, in the first place, have jurisdiction in our Committee over tax-related legislation. In the second place, we are adamantly opposed to enacting a tax credit in lieu of H.R. 3. The Committee has reported a comprehensive means of providing care for the

children of working parents, particularly low-income parents, and parents on welfare many of whom will go off welfare and into paid jobs if adequate and affordable child care is made available to them.

We do not oppose a tax credit that will be used, where necessary, for child care purposes. But we must also have a well-structured program that does more than provide custodial care for young, preschool children who need the education and developmental opportunities that are embraced under H.R.3.

After nearly three years in the making, working closely with child care experts, educators, early childhood development specialists, the National Governors' Association and others, the Education and Labor Committee has recommended to the whole House a bill which vastly expands the child care network nationwide. The Federal role must be a major one -- one of discerning a national need of overwhelming human significance, but a need that regrettably has not and cannot be met solely from state and local resources. Child care is unquestionably an unmet socio-economic need of national significance.

H.R. 3 is a bill that is flexible in its approach to providing child care, and has a great capacity for change that will allow state and local governments and the people they serve to adapt the several approaches embodied in the bill to their own special needs and demands. We have given states and localities the opportunity, and financial incentives through a combination of the involvement of business, public schools and private providers -- along with the continued involvement of churches which now provide more than a third of day care the nation has to offer -- through which the Federal government can help assure the availability of child care

at affordable costs for the working poor.

H.R. 3 does not create or cause unwarranted federal intervention in state child care standards through over-regulation. What it does do is to create a national environment and atmosphere in which the improvement and enhancement of child care can occur, through the Federal government's generous financial commitment to excellence.

I have reviewed the 54 page Licensing Requirements for Day Care Centers for the State of West Virginia, and I daresay the State has in place strong requirements for health, nutrition, safety, child-staff ratios, personnel pre-service and in-service training requirements, and other licensing approval requirements, including announced and unannounced site inspections of licensed facilities. West Virginia's child care standards would require very little, if any, changes or upgrading to meet recommended child care standards contained in the bill. I believe the State of West Virginia has imposed rigorous requirements for the knowledge and skill-base of the people who provide child care in the State in licensed facilities. This is a great source of reassurance to me, and to working parents, that their children are in safe and happy environments, and those standards are strengthened through well-planned parental involvement in the day care services provided. H. R. 3's early childhood education and development programs will, in turn, reinforce the State's care standards and encourage broad-based parental involvement.

I believe the programs contained in H.R. 3 signify the Federal government's major commitment to building a decent child care system for American workers and thir children, and that the programs embody the characteristics of good, decent, safe and affordable child care that have won the public's strong support for this legislation.

The recent Education Summit brought to light the collective belief of the Governors of the 50 states that the Federal government ought to take over and be responsible for making certain that every five-year old entering our public school system will be a healthy child, ready for a beginning career in education in every way, who have had a head start in gaining appropriate developmental, social and motor skills necessary for a successful, sustained learning experience in the public school system. The Governors recommended Federal assistance for programs such as these for all pre-schoolers. H.R. 3's comprehensive child care programs for pre-school children will go far in assuring that those five year old children will have had a structured head start in early childhood education and development before entering the school system.

It is my sincere hope that both substitutes for H.R. 3 will be defeated today, and that H.R. 3, along with the Ways and Means tax credit for child care will remain in the Reconciliation bill so that we can go to conference with the Senate on its similar bill, which also contains a tax credit provision.

Establishing a child care policy in the United States is, for me, an exciting challenge and something I am proud to be part of. I believe this is an historical event and worthy of great notice.

I commend our esteemed Chairman of the Education and Labor Committee Augustus Hawkins, and the Chairman of the Committee's Subcommittee on Human Resources, Mr. Kildee, first for their foresight, and then for their enduring patience, in working together in a spirit of true comity to bring the various and sundry supporting groups together, and for reaching an understanding that allowed this important legislation to reach the floor of

the House. I was pleased to have had a small, but nevertheless a direct part in the development of H.R. 3 in our Committee, and to have had the support of the Committee for my amendment which included Universities as eligible applicants to become providers of campus-based, nonresidential child care centers.

Mr. Chairman it is my hope that my colleagues will join me in defeating the two substitutes for H.R. 3 being offered today, and allow the child care programs contained in the Budget Reconciliation bill to be retained and sent to the House-Senate Conference Committee for resolution of outstanding differences between the two versions of this vital child care legislation.