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House Appropriators Move Ahead Without a Budget Resolution

On May 4th, for the second time this budget season, House leadership delayed action on the FY 2007 budget resolution after failing to garner enough support to ensure passage. House leaders still plan to bring the resolution to the floor for a vote, but even if they are successful, the prospects of reaching consensus with the Senate seem unlikely at this late date. The Senate passed their version of the FY 2007 budget resolution in March (see the [March 2006 Prevention Advocate](#) for details).

House Appropriators aren’t waiting around for the budget resolution. Representative Jerry Lewis (R-CA-41), Chair of the House Appropriations Committee, released appropriations subcommittee spending allocations last week, referred to as *302(b) allocations*. Rep. Lewis assumed an overall discretionary spending level of \$873 billion, consistent with the President’s request and with the overall level set by the budget resolution passed by the House Budget Committee in March. Rep. Lewis placed the funding level for the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education appropriations (Labor-HHS-Ed) subcommittee at \$141.9 billion, a \$4.1 billion increase over the President’s FY 2007 request. The Chairman provided the increase while maintaining the overall discretionary spending cap set by the President by shifting funding from other subcommittee allocations.

While the funding level set by Rep. Lewis is an improvement over the President’s request, it is still shy of the \$7.2 billion increase requested by House moderates, including Rep. Castle (R-DE-At large), and the roughly \$10 billion increase to Labor-HHS-Ed programs included in the Senate budget resolution (\$7 billion for Labor-HHS-Ed in general and an additional \$3 billion for LIHEAP). If the funding level for Labor-HHS-Ed appropriations is not increased, the programs we care about (child abuse prevention services, early education, child care, and child welfare services, among many others) could be on the chopping block.

Next Steps:

Chairman Lewis has stated his goal for completing House action on appropriations bills by July 4th. To that end, appropriations subcommittees began markups of spending bills last week. The full committee is scheduled to take up the Agriculture, Interior, and Veterans Affairs bills this week, followed by the Energy-Water and Homeland Security bills. Labor-HHS-Ed, historically one of the most hotly contested spending bills, is expected to be one of the last spending bills for the Appropriations committee (and Congress for that matter) to consider.



By May 15th, Prevent Child Abuse America will have posted to our [Legislative Action Center](#) alerts and sample messages to Congress on specific appropriations items – such as CAPTA and Promoting Safe and Stable Families. Be sure to visit our website for talking points on appropriations, or to e-mail your members of Congress about programs prevention advocates care about.

So, what's the hold up on the House Budget Resolution?

On March 29th, the House Budget Committee reported out a budget resolution that sets the overall FY 2007 discretionary funding level at \$873 billion, consistent with President Bush's budget request. The resolution includes reconciliation instructions to cut funding for mandatory programs by \$6.8 billion over five years. \$4 billion of those cuts are designated for programs under the jurisdiction of the House Ways and Means Committee, and so could include TANF, child welfare, Medicaid, and other social services programs.

House Democrats are united in opposition to the Budget Committee's resolution, which means that House leadership needs to build support solely within the Republican caucus to bring the resolution to the floor. Three factions are aggravating attempts to reach consensus:

Moderate Republicans. 23 moderate Republicans signed on to a letter to Speaker Hastert (R-IL-14) requesting increases to non-security, non-emergency discretionary programs totaling almost \$8 billion over the budget committee request, pitting the moderates against...

The Republican Study Committee (RSC). The RSC, a group of fiscally conservative House Republicans, does not support any increase above the spending levels set by the resolution. In addition, the group is pressing for budget procedural changes that would curb earmarks, limit emergency spending, provide line-item veto authority for the President, and create a commission with the authority to eliminate funding for federal programs, pitting the RSC against...

The House Appropriations Committee. Appropriators view the procedural changes offered by the RSC as an attempt to usurp some of their considerable power over federal spending. While leadership has agreed to appropriators' demands to not add any earmark rule changes to the budget resolution, many hurdles to reaching a final agreement remain.

Congressional Briefings Highlight EBAH Now Let's Build on the Momentum

Prevent Child Abuse America cosponsored two well-attended, Capitol Hill events in early April to draw attention to the home visit field and increase support for the *Education Begins at Home Act* (S 503; HR 3628). On April 6th, a briefing was held on the Senate side; a second briefing took place the following morning in a House office building. Both events were cosponsored by the Home Visiting Coalition, an informal group of national organizations who promote home visitation on Capitol Hill as a proven strategy for improving parenting and family health and ensuring school success.

Panelists at the briefings included home visitation program participants, program site administrators, and researcher Lisa Klein, PhD. At the Senate briefing, an additional presenter spoke about military families; the House event focused on crime reduction benefits and included remarks from a Delaware police chief. Senator Kit Bond (R-MO), chief sponsor of S 503, spoke at the Senate briefing about his personal experience with the Parents as Teachers program. Representative Danny K. Davis (D-IL-7) welcomed attendees to the House briefing and stayed on to listen to each presenter, even taking notes throughout.



The Education Begins at Home Act (S 503 and HR 3628)

As reported in previous issues of the *Prevention Advocate*, EBAH would extend to a broad range of families the opportunity to benefit from Healthy Families America and other quality home visitation programs. The legislation would provide \$500 million over three years to help states establish or expand quality home visitation programs. Of the \$500 million authorized, \$400 million would be provided to states on a formula basis to expand and enhance home visiting programs, while the remaining \$100 million would be divided between two competitive grants to reach military families and families with English Language Learners.

Take Action on EBAH!

Prevent Child Abuse America and its partners are working harder than ever to capitalize on the momentum created at the April briefings and move EBAH forward to enactment. As of May 7th, 39 House members ([current list of HR 3628 cosponsors](#)) and 15 Senators ([current list of S 503 cosponsors](#)) had signed on to cosponsor EBAH. Here's what you can do to help us garner additional support:

1.) Ask your members of Congress to cosponsor EBAH.

Visit Prevent Child Abuse America's [Legislative Action Center](#) to send an e-mail to both of your U.S. Senators and your Representative, or to find talking points for drafting your own letter. Remember, original letters that include state-specific information on quality home visiting programs have the greatest impact.

In addition to sending an e-mail, you can call your members of Congress through the U.S. Capitol Switchboard at 202-224-3121. Tips for calling members of Congress:

- Identify yourself and the organization you work for, making clear that you live/work/have programs in the Congressperson's state or district.
- Let them know that you are calling about the Education Begins at Home Act, and would like to speak to the aide who handles this issue. This will vary by office, but will usually be the person who handles child welfare or human services.
- Message: *I'm calling to request that Representative/Senator _____ cosponsor the Education Begins at Home Act, bipartisan legislation that would establish the first federal funding stream specifically dedicated to supporting parents through quality early childhood home visitation programs.*
- Be prepared to provide information on home visiting in your community. If home visiting is not available in your community, discuss the need for these services.
- Offer to e-mail follow-up information to the aide.

2.) Sign on to letters requesting a hearing and mark-up in each chamber.

The next step in moving EBAH forward is to have the appropriate committee in each chamber schedule a hearing and mark-up. Hearings provide an opportunity to submit important testimony about the legislation, and – in this case – the home visit field, so that the rationale for EBAH becomes part of the congressional record. Once hearings are held, the subcommittee may meet to “mark up,” or make changes, to the legislation.

In conjunction with the Home Visiting Coalition, Prevent Child Abuse America is asking national and state-level organizations to sign on to two EBAH support letters. The first is directed to Senators Enzi (R-WY) and Alexander (R-TN), who chair, respectively, the Senate Health, Education, Labor and



Pensions Committee and the Subcommittee on Education and Early Childhood Development. The letter offers organizational support for EBAH and asks that Sens. Enzi and Alexander schedule a hearing and mark-up this summer. The second letter is addressed to Representatives McKeon (R-CA-25) and Castle (R-DE-At Large), who chair, respectively, the House education committee and subcommittee that have jurisdiction over EBAH, requesting that they too schedule a committee hearing and markup and move EBAH to enactment. No program model is referenced in this letter because it is being circulated by several national organizations, including Prevent Child Abuse America, Parents as Teachers, and HIPPIY USA.

A copy of the letter is included as the last page of this *Prevention Advocate*. If your organization would like to sign on to these letters, please e-mail Jane Ascroft (jascroft@preventchildabuse.org) or Bridget Gavaghan (bgavaghan@preventchildabuse.org) at Prevent Child Abuse America.

Finance Committee Holds 1st Child Welfare Hearing in 10 Years Schedules Additional Hearing on Promoting Safe and Stable Families

On April 25th, the Senate Finance Committee held a hearing titled “*The Social and Economic Effects of the Methamphetamine Epidemic on America’s Child Welfare System*,” its first full committee hearing on child welfare issues in almost 10 years. The committee has jurisdiction over child welfare issues, but has focused attention on other areas in recent years, including TANF reauthorization and tax cuts. In his opening remarks, Senator Baucus (D-MT), ranking member of the committee, called meth the “scourge of many rural American communities.” The committee heard from families and individuals recovering from meth addictions, state and nonprofit agency representatives, and a representative from the National Center on Substance Abuse and Child Welfare. You can watch the entire hearing or download the speakers’ testimonies at: <http://finance.senate.gov/sitepages/hearings.htm>.

Prevent Child Abuse America submitted written testimony for the meth/child welfare hearing outlining the connection between substance abuse and child maltreatment and emphasizing the need for the federal government to invest more funding in prevention services, specifically through the Promoting Safe and Stable Families (PSSF) program. PSSF provides the largest federal funding source dedicated to prevention and family support services in child welfare. The program’s current authorization expires at the end of the FY 2006. The April 25th hearing was a precursor to committee deliberations over the reauthorization of the program.

The committee has already scheduled a second hearing on child welfare issues for May 10th, titled “*Fostering Permanence: Progress Achieved and Challenges Ahead for America’s Child Welfare System*.” While PSSF was a peripheral issue in the April 25th hearing, the May 10th hearing is expected to focus on issues specific to PSSF reauthorization, such as funding for the program, program outcomes, and state’s reporting requirements. Details are available on the committee’s website at: <http://finance.senate.gov/sitepages/hearing051006.htm>.

Senate Passes Sex Offender Registry Bill

With no opposition to speak of, the *Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act* (S 1086) passed the Senate by unanimous consent on May 4th. The intent of the legislation is to establish a national sex offender registry and to enhance mandatory sentences for people convicted of certain sex crimes against children. Among other provisions, S 1086:



- Requires each “participating” state to maintain a single sex offender registry, and to provide such information to the U.S. Attorney General, who is charged with maintaining a national sex offender registry at the FBI. Participating states are those that participate in a grant program – called the Sex Offender Management Assistance Program – authorized by the legislation.
- Requires registrations to include the sex offender’s name, address, Social Security number, name and address of employer and/or school, license plate number, photograph, and fingerprints.
- Establishes three tiers of sex offenders based on the seriousness of the crime and the age of the victim.
- Requires participating states to make information on Tier II and Tier III offenders available to the public via an internet site maintained by the state (states can also post information on Tier I offenders, at their discretion).
- Requires the Attorney General to maintain a national Internet site (the National Sex Offender Public Registry) through which the public can access information from state registries.
- Increases criminal penalties for a range of sex crimes against children.

S 1086 is considered a companion measure to HR 4472, the *Children’s Safety and Violent Crime Reduction Act*, which passed the House on March 7th and was reported on in the previous edition of [Prevention Advocate](#). Despite some similarities, there are two major differences between these bills that are worth noting. First, the House bill would include most juvenile offenders in the national sex offender registry; jurisdictions are given the option to exempt Tier I juveniles but no others. The Senate bill, on the other hand, specifically excludes from the registry anyone “subject to such requirements because of a delinquent adjudication that occurred when the individual was a minor, unless that individual was charged and convicted as an adult.”

The second major difference is that the House bill includes language that would create a national registry of cases of child abuse and neglect; the Senate bill contains no such language and limits itself to sex offenders. There was some talk of attaching S 1940 – *the Childhelp National Registry Act* – to S 1086, but the bill passed as a stand-alone measure without language creating a national child abuse registry.

Stay tuned to *Prevention Advocate* for more information on these bills and how Congress decides to reconcile their differences. At press time, it was not yet clear whether a conference committee would be established, or whether the House would simply pass the Senate version and leave it at that.

House and Senate Pass Lobby “Reform” Packages

The push to reform federal lobby laws (see the [February 2006 Prevention Advocate](#)) has culminated in two separate, scaled back measures – S 2349 and HR 4975 – which now must be reconciled. Both bills increase lobbyist disclosure requirements and take steps to discourage earmarks, but neither goes as far as some congressional watchdogs would have liked.

The Senate passed S 2349 on March 29th by a vote of 90 to 8. The House narrowly passed HR 4975 on May 3rd. Highlights include the following provisions:

Registered Lobbyists: Both bills up the ante on lobby disclosure requirements by requiring quarterly, rather than semiannual, reporting. Reports would have to be filed electronically and made available to the public online. \$100,000 fines could be levied for rule violations. Neither bill requires professional lobbyists to document every lobby contact with a member; stricter language requiring detailed documentation was removed from the House bill in response to member opposition.



Gifts & Meals: The Senate bill prohibits lobbyists from giving gifts and drinks to members of Congress but would allow meals valued up to \$50 so long as lawmakers disclose it on their websites. The House measure leaves the current \$50 limit (\$100 per year) on gifts and meals in place.

Grass-Roots Lobbying: The Senate bill requires nonprofit advocacy groups that spend more than \$100,000 per year, or \$25,000 per quarter, on lobbying activities to disclose money raised and spent as well as any affiliation with lobbying firms. The House bill does not include comparable language.

Earmarks: The Senate bill requires that all bills, amendments, and conference reports – for both appropriations and authorizations – describe the purpose of each earmark and disclose the identify of the sponsoring member of Congress. An earmark added by a conference committee to any bill would be subject to a point of order, meaning that 60 votes would be needed to keep the earmark in the bill. Conference reports – often home to earmarks added during last minute negotiations – would also need to be posted online at least 48 hours before a vote.

The House bill requires appropriations bill conference reports to list all earmarks and their sponsors. Earmarks not properly disclosed would be subject to a point of order. Language on earmarks added to authorization bills is not included in the House-passed bill.

Privately-Funded Travel: Neither bill bans privately funded travel; rather, they require submission of itineraries to the Committee on Standards and Official Conduct, which will rule on trip appropriateness. The Senate bill requires that such trips be for educational purposes, and bans lobbyists from these trips.

527s: Language affecting so-called 527 organizations (named after IRS code 527, under which these groups operate) moved as a separate House bill (HR 513) that passed April 5th. This legislation requires 527 organizations to comply with disclosure and campaign finance regulations that govern political parties and political action committees. No such language has passed the Senate.

Differences in the bills must now be reconciled. Stay tuned to future editions of *Prevention Advocate* for updates on lobby and earmark reform efforts.

Feds Mark Child Abuse Prevention Month

National Child Abuse Prevention Month is familiar to many prevention advocates as a special time to host events that spread the word about prevention and positive parenting (*this is not to say that you don't do this work all year long*). So many activities were planned for April all across the nation -- in communities, neighborhoods, parks, churches, schools, and state capitols -- that *Prevention Advocate* writers would have had to work quadruple overtime to compile a suitable list. Instead, what follows is a partial compilation of activities undertaken by policymakers at the national level in recognition of National Child Abuse Prevention Month:

President Signs Proclamation: President Bush signed a proclamation on March 29th designating April 2006 as National Child Abuse Prevention Month and encouraging “all citizens to protect our children and help build strong communities where individuals, families, and children are valued and supported.” The annual tradition of designating the month of April to be National Child Abuse Prevention Month was begun in 1979 by then President Jimmy Carter. The 2006 proclamation is available on the White House Web site at:

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/03/print/20060329-4.html>.



Community Resource Packets Distributed: Also in time for April, the Office on Child Abuse and Neglect at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), in conjunction with the National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect Information, made available a community resource packet for child abuse prevention called *Safe Children and Healthy Families Are a Shared Responsibility*. The resource packet is available in English and Spanish, and includes information that can be used by prevention advocates to get the word out about ways to support families and encourage positive parenting. Packets are available at <http://nccanch.acf.hhs.gov/topics/prevention/index.cfm> or by calling the National Clearinghouse at 1-800-394-3366.

HHS Releases Child Maltreatment Stats: HHS released *Child Maltreatment 2004* on April 4th. According to the new report, an estimated three million children were reported to have been abused or neglected during FY 2004; approximately 872,000 of these children were determined by state CPS agencies to have been substantiated victims of child maltreatment. More than 60% of children were neglected by their parents or caregivers. Approximately 18% were physically abused; 10% were sexually abused; and 7% were emotionally abused. Children zero to three had the highest rates of victimization, as did African-American children, Pacific Islander children, and Native American children. Nearly 1,500 children died from abuse or neglect; 80% of these children were under age four.

Forty percent of maltreated children received no services following a substantiated report. An estimated 268,000 children (19% of substantiated cases) were placed in foster care. In addition, HHS reports that nearly two million children received preventive services in 2004.

Information for *Child Maltreatment 2004* was compiled using the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS), which collects case-level data from states on all children who received an assessment or investigation by a CPS agency. The full report is available at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/pubs/cm04/index.htm>.

Senate Passes Shaken Baby Resolution: On April 7th, the Senate passed a resolution (S RES 439) submitted by Senator Chris Dodd (D-CT) designating the 3rd week of April as National Shaken Baby Syndrome Awareness Week. A briefing on Capitol Hill focusing on Shaken Baby Syndrome was held April 25th.

Kinship Caregiver National Call in Day May 10th ***Call Your Senators Toll-free at 888-233-1221***

On May 10th, advocates from across the country will call their Senators and ask them to cosponsor *The Kinship Caregiver Support Act* (S 985). This legislation, introduced by Senators Clinton (D-NY) and Snowe (R-ME), would provide valuable assistance to abused and neglected children placed in the care of relatives by allowing states to use title IV-E funds to pay for kinship and guardianship placements. Currently, only states with waivers can use federal funds to support these arrangements.

A coalition of groups, including Child Welfare League of America, AARP, and Generations United are urging advocates to call their Senators on May 10th and ask them to cosponsor S 985. The coalition has established a toll-free number that connects advocates right to the Capitol Switchboard. To participate in the Call-in Day, call 888-233-1221 on May 10th and asked to be connected to your Senator's office.



Casey Family Programs to Honor Tom Birch

On May 18th, Casey Family Programs will honor Tom Birch for his 25 years of uncompromising commitment to protect and improve the lives of America's most vulnerable children. Tom Birch leads the National Child Abuse Coalition, formed in 1981 to coordinate federal advocacy efforts on behalf of abused and neglected children and is based in Washington, D.C. He is a tireless advocate for child abuse prevention policies, including the *Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act* and *Promoting Safe and Stable Families*. Prevent Child Abuse America has enjoyed a long partnership with Tom Birch and we congratulate him on this special recognition.

PCA America's 2006 Conference Less Than 2 Weeks Away! Advanced Registration Now Closed – Onsite Registration Will be Available

Advanced registration for **PCA America National Conference – America's Families: We All Play a Supporting Role** – is now closed. You can still register for the conference onsite for a **registration rate of \$410 per person**.

The conference will be held May 21-24, 2006, in San Diego, California, at the Town & Country Resort. Details are available online at:

<http://www.preventchildabuse.org/events/conference/index.shtml>.

An exciting roster of educational sessions awaits you at the PCA America national conference, as well as opportunities for formal and informal networking with peers from all over the country who value America's children and families as much as you do.

Bring the whole family! The conference will feature many activities for parents and children together, such as two family-friendly workshops, Kids Korner with crafts and games, and the Lounge – a cool place to relax and get to know your fellow attendees and their families. Plus the San Diego area has lots to offer by way of family fun – the world-famous San Diego Zoo, LEGOLand, SeaWorld and Balboa Park, to name just a few. Visit the [While In San Diego](#) section on our conference website for more information about conference programming and fun things to do while in San Diego –

<http://www.preventchildabuse.org/events/conference/index.shtml>.

Contact Rebecca Loden (rloden@preventchildabuse.org or 312-334-6809) or Ann Johnson (ajohnson@preventchildabuse.org or 312-334-6845) with any questions.

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Education Begins At Home Act Sign-on Letter

National and state organizational sign-ons can be submitted to jascroft@preventchildabuse.org or bgavaghan@preventchildabuse.org at Prevent Child Abuse America.

May 2006

Dear [Senator / Representative]:

The undersigned organizations urge you to co-sponsor the bi-partisan Education Begins at Home Act (EBAH), which would establish the first dedicated federal funding stream for quality, voluntary home visitation programs for parents with young children. Under such programs, specially trained home visitors deliver parent education and family support services directly to parents with young children, providing guidance on enhancing children's development from birth through kindergarten entry. Quality early childhood home visitation programs lead to research-proven, positive outcomes for children and families, including greater school readiness, enhanced child health and development, improved parenting practices, and reductions in child maltreatment and later criminality.

The Education Begins at Home Act would authorize \$500 million over three years through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to help states establish or expand quality home visitation programs at the state and local level. \$400 million would be authorized for states to: 1) provide eligible families with voluntary early childhood home visitation at least monthly; 2) offer annual health, vision, hearing and development screening for eligible children; 3) provide referrals for eligible families, as needed, to additional resources; 4) offer group meetings to further enhance the information and skill-building addressed during home visits; 5) provide training and technical assistance to early childhood home visitation staff; and 6) coordinate various models of early childhood home visitation to ensure families are receiving the most appropriate and effective services to meet their needs. An additional \$100 million authorization over three years would support home visitation efforts targeted at English Language Learner and military families.

Home visitation is an effective, research-based and cost-efficient way to bring families and resources together and to ensure that all children have the opportunity to grow up healthy, ready to learn and able to become productive members of society. Investing in this research-proven approach now will mean savings down the road in health, education and criminal justice costs. Please join this important effort by co-sponsoring the Education Begins at Home Act.

Sincerely,

Organization Name: _____

*Variations for Committee / Subcommittee Chairman –
Senator Enzi, Senator Alexander, Representative McKeon and Representative Castle*

First sentence – [The undersigned organizations urge you to move the bi-partisan Education Begins at Home Act (EBAH) to enactment this year. This important legislation would establish the first dedicated federal funding stream for quality, voluntary home visitation programs for parents with young children.]

Last sentence – [We urge you to schedule a hearing and mark-up in your committee this spring to move the Education Begins Act forward to enactment this year.]