

LOS ANGELES, Jan. 17, 2014 /PRNewswire/ -- "The Fiscal Year 2014 Omnibus spending bill, signed today by President Obama, expands funding for early childhood education programs and takes an important step towards advancing the critical cause of early learning and support for our youngest children.

The science, research and practice demonstrate that quality preschool and early development programs prepare children for a lifetime of learning and success. Investments in these programs pay off in increased economic growth for our nation. This spending package, which passed both the House and Senate with overwhelming bipartisan majorities, not only fully restores Head Start funding from the harmful sequestration cuts of last year, but provides \$500 million

for an Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership program to strengthen existing child care centers and expand Early Head Start for our most vulnerable children. The bill further allocates \$250 million

under Race to the Top, encouraging states to develop, enhance and expand preschool programs. The Child Care Development Block Grant, which plays an important role in the funding of and quality standards for existing child care centers, received a boost of \$154 million

. Together, these funds will improve and expand needed services for children from birth to age 5.

I commend Congress and the President for their foresight in prioritizing early education programs that will help to build foundations for early learning in California and the nation as a whole. We are hopeful that this bipartisan support translates to support for the broader Strong Start For America's Children Act (HR 3461/S. 1697)."

Sharon Woodson-Bryant (213) 482-7507 swoodson@first5la.org

SOURCE First 5 LA