STATE CAPITOL
P.O. BOX 942849
SACRAMENTO, CA 94249-0115

California Legislature

April 24, 2025

Congresswoman Zoe Lofgren
Chair, California Democratic Congressional Delegation
1401 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

U.S. Senator Alex Padilla
331 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Congressman Ken Calvert
Dean, California Republican Delegation
2205 Rayburn Building
Washington, DC 20515

U.S. Senator Adam Schiff
112 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

RE: Urging Federal Protection and Investment in Head Start

Dear Chair Lofgren, Dean Calvert, Senator Padilla, Senator Schiff, and Members of the California Congressional Delegation,

As members of the California State Legislature, we urge your continued and unwavering support for the **Head Start** programs that serve over **85,000 children and families** across California each year. These programs are foundational to our state's early childhood education, home visiting, and family support infrastructure — and are deeply aligned with our shared goals of advancing opportunity, equity, and economic resilience.

California receives nearly **$1.5 billion annually in federal Head Start funding for our local communities**, supporting a vast and diverse network of high-quality early learning and comprehensive family services in across the state [1]. Early Head Start, in addition to providing child care, plays a crucial role in our **home visiting landscape**, offering weekly in-home visits by trained professionals for families with infants and toddlers. Together, these evidence-based services have been shown to strengthen parent-child relationships, increase child development outcomes, reduce instances of child maltreatment, and support parents in achieving stability through education or employment [2][3][4][5].

At a time when working families face rising child care costs and economic instability, Head Start also serves as essential workforce infrastructure in California. Access to reliable early education supports parents to work or pursue training, and early childhood jobs — many held by women of color — support community well-being and economic mobility [5]. The current lack of child care access is estimated to cost California **$17 billion in lost productivity and economic output each year** [6], cuts to Head Start would exacerbate this loss.

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Head Start's economic impact extends far beyond the direct $1.5 billion dollar investment in services. Head Start providers employ over 26,000 Californians, who spend those earnings in the state. Head Start providers also utilize thousands of contractors, for services ranging from accounting, to tree trimming, to gassing up school busses – all of which are threatened by proposed cuts.

We are therefore deeply alarmed by the April 1 closure of half of the Regional Offices supporting Head Start providers (including the office serving California) and recent reports indicating that there are **active policy discussions within the Trump administration to eliminate Head Start entirely** [7]. While no formal proposal has been introduced, this news — combined with recent budget freezes and proposed cuts — raises serious concerns about the future of early learning for millions of children across the country. The loss of Head Start would be devastating for California — displacing tens of thousands of children, eliminating thousands of jobs, and disrupting services that are often unavailable elsewhere, such as developmental screenings, mental health care, and family case management.

As such, we respectfully urge you to:

- **Reject any proposals that weaken or eliminate Head Start**;
- **Preserve and grow federal investments in Head Start**, including full funding for workforce and capacity-building needs and expanding access for children;
- And **champion Head Start as a vital part of California and our nation's early learning and care system**.

This is a moment to reaffirm our commitment to young children and families, especially those furthest from opportunity. We are grateful for your leadership and urge you to stand firm in defending and advancing these essential programs.

Sincerely,

Patrick J. Ahrens
California State Assemblymember, District 26

Monique Limón
California State Senator, District 21

(On behalf of the attached signers from the California State Legislature)

cc: Honorable Doug LaMalfa; Honorable Jared Huffman; Honorable Kevin Kiley; Honorable Mike Thompson; Honorable Tom McClintock; Honorable Ami Bera; Honorable Doris Matsui; Honorable John Garamendi; Honorable Josh Harder; Honorable Mark DeSaulnier; Honorable Nancy Pelosi; Honorable Lateefah Simon; Honorable Adam Gray; Honorable Eric Swalwell; Honorable Kevin Mullin; Honorable Sam Liccardo; Honorable Ro Khanna; Honorable Jimmy Panetta; Honorable Vince Fong; Honorable Jim Costa; Honorable David Valadao; Honorable Jay Obernolte; Honorable Salud Carbajal; Honorable Raul Ruiz; Honorable Julia Brownley;

Honorable George T. Whitesides; Honorable Judy Chu; Honorable Luz Rivas; Honorable Laura Friedman; Honorable Gil Cisneros; Honorable Brad Sherman; Honorable Pete Aguilar; Honorable Jimmy Gomez; Honorable Norma Torres; Honorable Ted Lieu; Honorable Sydney Kamlager-Dove; Honorable Linda Sánchez; Honorable Mark Takano; Honorable Young Kim; Honorable Robert Garcia; Honorable Maxine Waters; Honorable Nanette Barragán; Honorable Derek Tran; Honorable Lou Correa; Honorable Dave Min; Honorable Darrell Issa; Honorable Mike Levin; Honorable Scott Peters; Honorable Sara Jacobs; Honorable Juan Vargas

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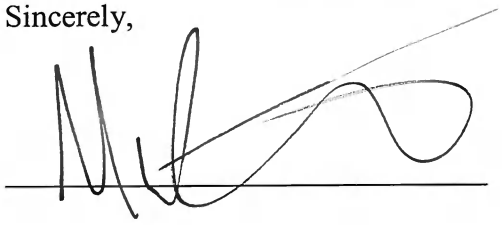
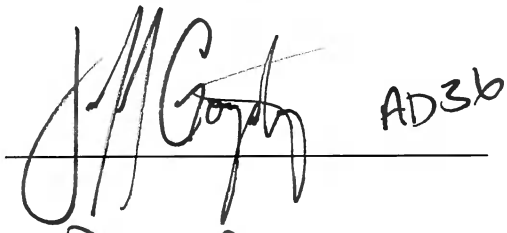
Sources:

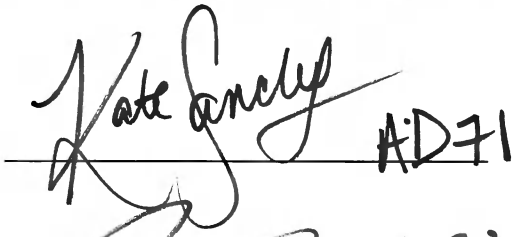
[1] National Head Start Association, 2023 State Fact Sheet.
[2] California Department of Education. *Early Head Start–Child Care Partnerships (EHS-CCP).* https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/op/ehsccpgrant.asp
[3] Children Now. *A Statewide Approach to Strengthening Home Visiting in California* (2023). https://www.childrennow.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/a-statewide-approach-to-strengthening-home-visiting.pdf
[4] Harvard Center on the Developing Child: Lifelong Health and Learning.
[5] Heckman Equation: The Economics of Early Childhood Investment.
[6] Children Now, *2024 California Children's Report Card.*
[7] U.S. Chamber Foundation, *Want to Grow the Economy? Fix the Child Care Crisis* (2023).
[8] *USA Today*, "Trump Allies Quietly Exploring Plan to Eliminate Head Start," April 11, 2025. https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/education/2025/04/11/trump-proposal-eliminating-head-start/83045346007

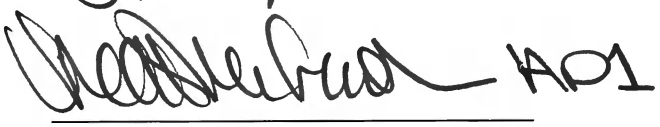
Attached signers from the California State Legislature
Re: April 24, 2025 Urging Federal Protection and Investment in Head Start letter

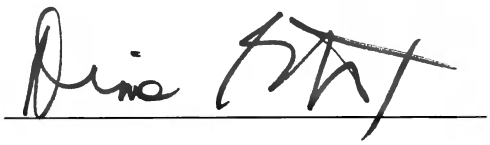
Sincerely,

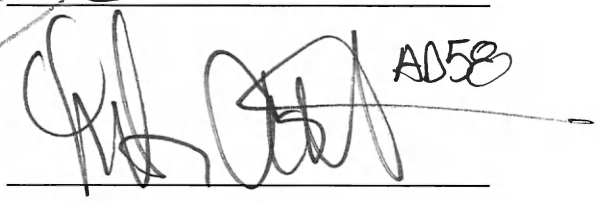


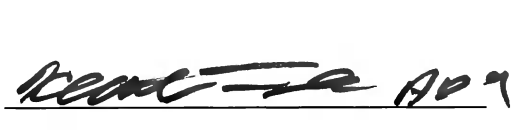


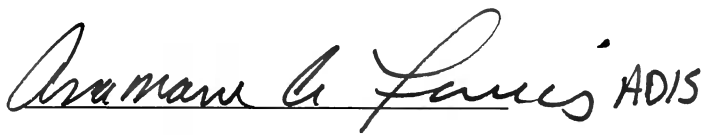


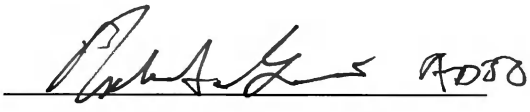


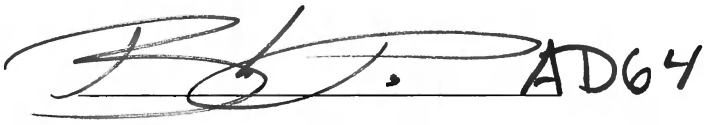


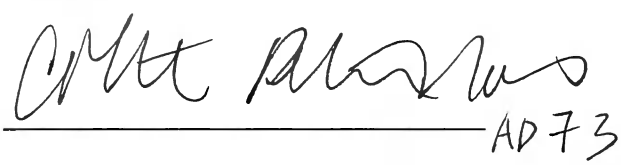












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Sincerely,

AD10

AD 80

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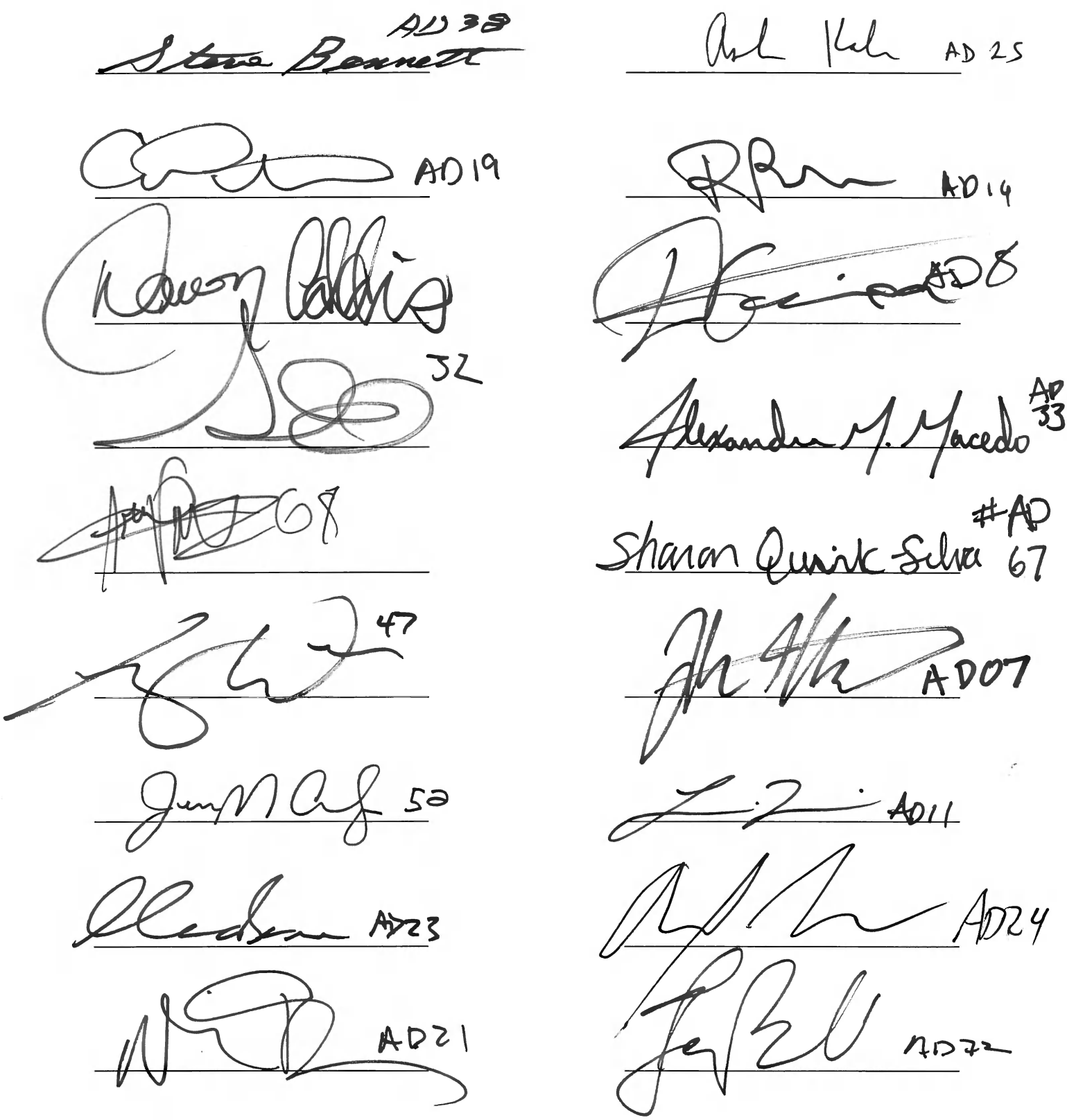

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Sincerely,

Blanca E. Rubio AD48

AD65

Jesse Gabriel

AD31

AD45

AD20

AD12

Mial Bonta AD18

Maggy Wood AD6

Buffy Wicks AD14

AD70

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Delivered Electronically

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Sincerely,

Monique Limón, SD 21

Mike McGuire, Senate President pro Tempore

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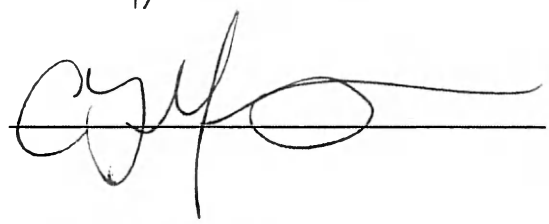
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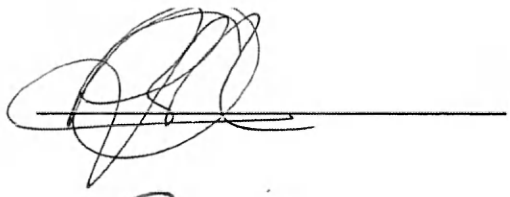
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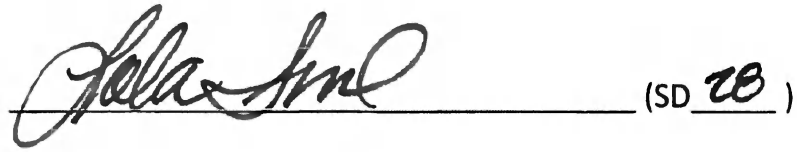
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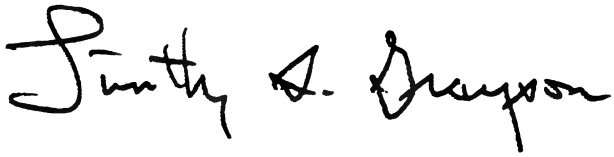

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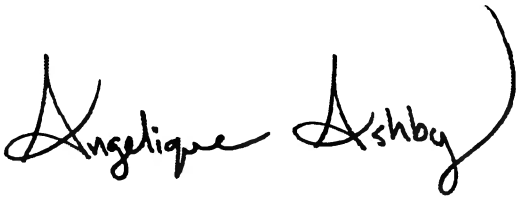

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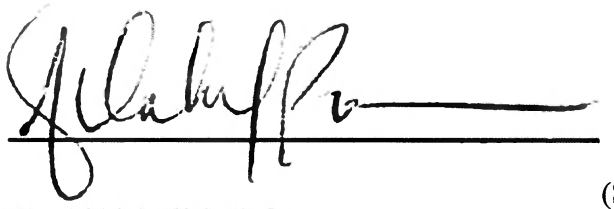

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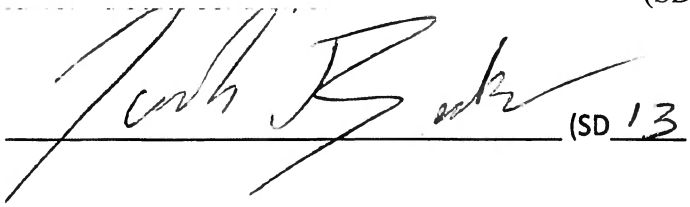

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