



06/15/2007

Casey, Rendell support early-childhood education

Commitment to long-range policies is always difficult for politicians, who usually want to see the results while they're still in office rather than in retirement or the private sector.

It's a great credit, then, to U.S. Sen. Bob Casey and Gov. Ed Rendell, that they have become leading advocates of early-childhood education. Advertisement

Rendell has made early-childhood education a cornerstone of his broader education policy. This year the governor's proposed budget includes \$25 million to help more school districts establish all-day kindergarten, enrollment in which is lower in Pennsylvania than in most comparable states. Abundant research has shown that kids enrolled in all-day kindergarten tend to achieve higher scores on standardized tests, experience fewer grade retentions, and graduate.

The governor also has proposed a \$75 million commitment to making pre-kindergarten programs available to an additional 11,100 children.

As in many other states, the demand for pre-kindergarten education in Pennsylvania exceeds the supply, especially for kids from low-income families.

Casey has introduced the Prepare All Kids Act of 2007, which would make \$5 billion in grants available to help states provide pre-K education, while establishing high standards for teachers, class sizes, curriculum and family participation, all of which have been shown to be components of long-term educational success.

Elected officials at the state and federal levels, unfortunately, often are judged mostly by their ability to deliver pork for physical projects. The initiatives proposed by Casey and Rendell are more about building engineers than building bridges.

The General Assembly should adopt Rendell's proposals; Congress should adopt those promoted by Casey.



©The REPUBLICAN & Herald 2007