

The NUNES Report

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Nunes makes gains on water issues

Aggressive legislative strategy makes waves for the 21st District

On the heels of a rare Congressional hearing on water in the Central Valley, Rep. Devin Nunes called on Water and Power Subcommittee Chairman Ken Calvert to speed up the process through which new water storage would be built.

Normally, water projects are built only when Congress explicitly vote to authorize them.

Recognizing the rare success in recent years of getting any new water project approved, Rep. Devin Nunes introduced language into the pending House Cal-Fed bill to give water projects more leverage for approval.

More specifically, if approved the bill would automatically authorize any water project in CalFed deemed feasible.

Additionally, it would give Congress only 120 legislative days to pass a bill disappearing the project.

“Providing California with concrete steps toward new surface water storage will be a great success for all. In the coming decades, the growth in the Valley will only



Elected officials, community leaders, farmers, water officials and other interested residents have been taking tours of Millerton Lake and the possible dam sites near Temperance Flat put on by the Resources Management Coalition. Above, Bill Swanson, a consultant for the US Bureau of Reclamation explains the geography of the area.

worsen our water crisis,” Mr. Nunes said. “Now is the time to increase our water supply, reliability, and efficiency for the future.”

Lawmakers will consider the matter when they convene in September.

In other water news, a bill that funds the Department of Interior’s energy and water projects was passed by the House of Representatives, including funding requests from Rep. Devin Nunes.

In all, the bill included

\$15.4 million in funds for projects throughout the 21st Congressional District represented by Mr. Nunes.

“I’m pleased my colleagues recognized how important these issues are to my constituents,” said Mr. Nunes, a member of the House Committee on Resources.

“These funds will help us better control one of our most precious resources—water. These projects serve a variety of purposes, from

Quick Facts

Rep. Devin Nunes has voted in the House of Representatives 563 times since taking office in January.



See Water page 3

Nunes votes to strengthen education

Rep. Devin Nunes voted in favor of the Teacher Recruitment and Retention Act — a congressional plan to place highly qualified math, science, and special education teachers in the schools where they are needed most.

The House passed the bill by a vote of 362-54.

Mr. Nunes, a former College of the Sequoias board trustee, was a co-sponsor of the bill. The legislation works with the No Child Left Behind Act to make certain the goal of having a qualified teacher in every classroom is met.

“The teacher shortages that schools are facing in the areas of math, science, and special education are real, and they are staggering,” Mr. Nunes said. “Many students are not receiving a proper, well-rounded education because there simply are not enough teach-

ers. When students receive anything less than a full education, that’s a crisis and it’s time Congress acted.”

Five years ago, Congress created a teacher loan forgiveness program for qualified teachers who commit to teaching in a low-income school for five years. Under this program, a qualified teacher may receive loan forgiveness of up to \$5,000 after the fifth complete school year of teaching.

“The House of Representatives is strengthening education for all students. By recruiting qualified teachers through added incentives, we will improve our schools and fulfill America’s promise for our children,” Mr. Nunes said.

The Teacher Recruitment and Retention Act does the following:

- Expands the current



teacher loan forgiveness program to address critical shortage areas in math, science and special education.

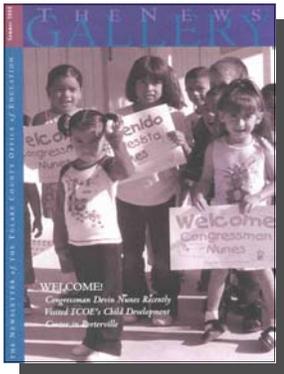
- Increases the total loan forgiveness up to \$17,500 for those teaching these high-need subjects.

- Improves the effectiveness of loan forgiveness as a recruitment and retention tool by recognizing that teachers often face financial hardship in the early years of teaching, and making loan-forgiveness available after the second complete year of teaching.

Quick Facts

Students at the Porterville Child Development Center in Porterville greet Rep. Devin Nunes with signs in English and Spanish.

His visit was featured in their newsletter this month.



Nunes says child tax credit checks are in the mail

The United States Treasury began mailing child tax credit checks to 25 million Americans, Rep. Devin Nunes, R-Visalia, announced.

“It’s gratifying to be able to give \$14 billion back to hard-working Americans who are trying to make ends meet,” said Mr. Nunes, an Assistant Majority Whip. “As children gear-up to head back to school, this much-needed tax relief will help American families buy school clothes and school supplies, among other necessities.”

In addition, stores such as Wal-Mart and Sam’s Club

have announced that they will cash these tax rebate checks at no additional charge.

The table below outlines how American families will begin receiving their child credit checks:

If the last two digits of your SSN are between 00-33, then the check was mailed July 25.

If the last two digits are between 34-66, then the check was mailed Aug. 1.

If the last two digits are between 67-99, then the check was mailed Aug. 8.

The Social Security number listed first on tax forms will be used to determine

when checks are sent. For example, if a husband’s name and Social Security number appear before his wife’s on tax forms sent to the IRS, then his identification number would be used to determine the mailing date.

“I will work to ensure that this increase in the child tax credit be made permanent,” Mr. Nunes said. “The folks in my district should be able to count on this important tax relief year after year.”



Nunes secures funds to fight meth

Rep also gets funds to back innovative ag crimes program

Rep. Devin Nunes voted to give California what it needs to continue the ongoing fight against methamphetamine production.

In a vote, the House of Representatives budgeted \$60 million for methamphetamine enforcement and clean up. Within that amount, the House urged the Department of Justice to make a portion of this money available for the California Methamphetamine Strategy. The request for funds was made by the Caucus to Fight and Control Methamphetamine, of which Mr. Nunes is a member.

The funds will be used to combat methamphetamine production and distribution, to target drug 'hot spots,' and to remove and dispose of hazardous materials at clandestine methampheta-

mine labs. Production, trafficking, and use of methamphetamine, an extremely destructive and addictive synthetic drug, continues to be a national problem.

While some of the total \$60 million budgeted for the meth problem will be used for training and technical assistance, other funds may be awarded on a competitive basis to those state and local communities with the largest meth problems and with effective strategies to reduce meth production and abuse. Fresno and Tulare counties have been identified as a high-traffic area for methamphetamine and will likely benefit from the grant programs.

At the request of Mr. Nunes, the House also urged administration officials to make a portion of the \$615 million available under the Edward Byrne Memorial State and Local Law Enforcement Assistance Pro-



gram available to Tulare County's innovative rural agricultural crime project, known as ACTION (Agricultural Crime Technology Information and Operations Network).

The funds are meant to be used to continue the project and to develop the "Light Speed Project" which will digitize agricultural crime

reports. The monies could be used to develop a National Resource and Research Center for new technology to fight agricultural crime.

Both measures will be considered in the Senate version of the 2004 budget, and must be signed by the President for approval.

Water cont.'d from page one

flood control, irrigation, protecting wildlife and recharging our groundwater for use by our residents."

Among the requests Mr. Nunes made that were approved in the Energy and Water Appropriations bill were:

- \$2 million to study the feasibility of building a dam on the upper San Joaquin River

- \$400,000 to continue Phase III of the Kaweah River Delta Corridor Enhance-

ment Study of the Central Valley Project

- \$2.1 million to continue a project to raise the spillway at Success Dam

- \$1 million to enhance Success Dam safety

- \$8.4 million to complete construction of the spillway at Terminus Dam on the Kaweah River

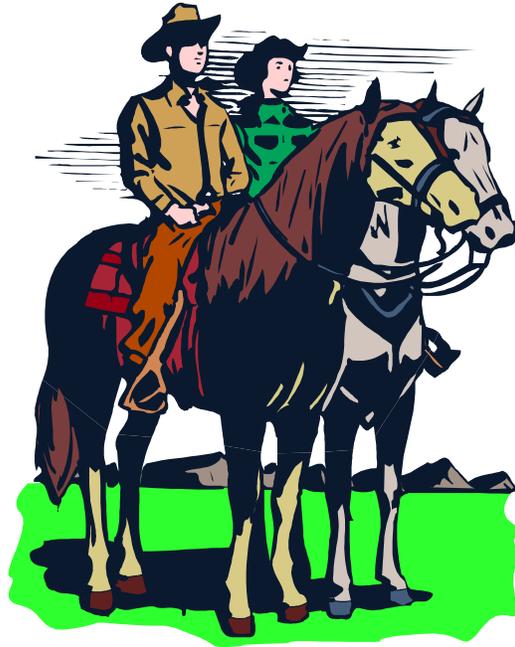
Within the Anadromous Fish Restoration Program, the bill urges the Bureau of Reclamation to use \$500,000 to participate with the Orange Cove Irrigation District to evaluate fishery restoration opportunities in the Mill Creek watershed.

- \$1 million for the Regional Drainage Plan for lands in and around the San Luis Unit of the Central Valley Project



Workers continue Terminus Dam spillway project.

Nunes defends right to ride with bill



Rep. Devin Nunes joined a Valley colleague today to introduce the Right to Ride Livestock on Federal Land Act.

Mr. Nunes and Rep. George Radanovich, R-Mariposa, said the bill preserves and facilitates the continued recreational use of pack and saddle stock animals on National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, Fish and Wild-

national environmental fundraising organizations who seek to restrict access to federal lands.”

The bill safeguards pack and saddle stock use as a natural way for visitors to enjoy federal lands. Families, scout and church groups, senior citizens and the disabled all use livestock to explore the backcountry.

“Our lands were first explored and established using

life Service and Forest Service lands.

“Livestock use on federal land has a long tradition in American culture,” Mr. Radanovich said. “Riding livestock is a great way to explore and experience our federal lands, and must preserve our riding heritage.

Unfortunately, livestock use is under fire from

horses and mules, from President Teddy Roosevelt to Sierra Club founder John Muir,” said Mr. Nunes, a member of House Committee on Resources. “People continue to enjoy our national treasures up close and personal today using pack and saddle stock. To restrict that use is to turn our backs on our heritage. I am happy to assist in introducing legislation aimed at preserving the historic and recreational use of pack and saddle stock on public lands.”

Mr. Nunes is an original co-sponsor of the legislation.

Visalia attorney Richard Cochran helped craft the bill. He is the former chair of the state Public Lands Committee for the Backcountry Horsemen and the current chairman of the Wolverton Pack Station Committee.

“Government agencies don’t always recognize stock users’ right to use public land,” Mr. Cochran said. “This legislation recognizes that historical use and works to safe guard it.”

Nunes gives boost to vets, economic development

Lawmakers passed another round of appropriations that include funding requested by Rep. Devin Nunes for veterans, agriculture, the environment and the economy.

Among the local items in the latest spending bill were:

\$350,000 for the International Agri-Center in Tulare. The funds, along with matching amounts, will help equip the Heritage Complex Learning Center and complete construction of a new 20,000 square foot exhibit

pavilion.

\$1.5 million to complete phase two of the International Center for Water Technology (ICWT) at California State University, Fresno.

\$500,000 in Economic Development Initiative funds for the City of Fresno to construct a five mile water conveyance pipeline to a surface water treatment plant.

\$200,000 in Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) funds for the Operation Clean Air (OCA) public education and awareness

campaign.

While the spending plan added \$1.4 billion for veterans for a total of \$27.2 billion, that budget amount does not include discretionary funds for individual congressional districts.

“We owe our veterans a debt we can never repay,” Mr. Nunes said. “They deserve the best care we can give them within our means. I am happy to vote in favor of giving them better care.”

Making progress on legislative and policy issues

Agriculture

Recognizing the need for improved nutrition in our nation's schools, Congressman Nunes co-sponsored HR 2832, which will improve student nutrition by expanding the Fruit and Vegetable Pilot Program.

The expanded pilot program will provide for the distribution of free fresh and dried fruits and fresh vegetables throughout the school day in California schools.

Constituent Inquires

In July, Rep. Nunes wrote to 1,793 constituents in response to their inquiries. To date, Rep. Nunes has responded to 7,682 constituents via the U.S. Mail.

Education

Throughout the U.S. there seems to be a growing number of individuals who are going through life without basic knowledge or understanding of American History. This is sad for all of us who take great pride in our nation and its beliefs, which is why Congressman Nunes co-sponsored H.R. 1078, the American History and Civics Education Act. This legislation would establish pilot program grants to fund programs for both K-12 teachers and high school students to strengthen their knowledge on American history and civics.

Environment

Air Quality

Due to the San Joaquin Valley's continued classification as a severe ozone non-attainment area by the Environmental Protection Agency, Congressman Nunes has cosponsored legislation to provide to a tax credit for qualifying clean technology engines (H.R. 2938).

This legislation is designed to provide incentives for businesses in the San Joaquin Valley to improve air quality by reducing emissions from diesel engines. A business would receive tax credits for up to 25% of the cost of replacing high pollution diesel engines with cleaner technology (capped at \$15,000 per business each year).

The proposal applies to heavy duty on-road diesel engines and off-highway diesel engines. The new equipment would have to be 50% cleaner than the old engine. This would sunset after 2009 to encourage compliance by the Clean Air Act deadline of 2010.

Critical Habitat

Recent controversy over the designation of critical habitat has convinced Congressman Nunes to cosponsor the Critical Habitat Reform Act (H.R. 2933). This legislation would moderately reform the process under which critical habitat for endangered species is designated. He believes that the critical habitat designation process has become so onerous due to incessant litigation and unworkable regulations that the original intent of the Endangered Species Act, to preserve and recover threatened animal and plant

species, has become a thing of the past.

This legislation would address six aspects of the critical habitat designation process which, if enacted, would help achieve a balance in designation between the preservation of the species and the rights of the landowners, state, and local governments whose land is designated. The "Critical Habitat Reform Act" would:

- Require the establishment of a recovery plan concurrent with the designation of critical habitat
- Limit the designation of critical habitat to the maximum extent "practicable, economically feasible, and determinable"
- Exclude areas that are currently under a Habitat Conservation Plan or under a state or federal conservation program
- Require the Service to consider local resource data, including maps, when considering areas for possible designation
- Require the economic impact analysis to consider the impact of lost revenues to land owners and to federal, state and local governments, as well as to include costs associated with the preparation of reports, surveys and analyses for landowners seeking to obtain approval from state, federal or local permitting agencies.

Foreign Affairs

Syria continues to support terrorism, develop weapons of mass destruction and refuses to end its occupation of Lebanon. Recognizing the need to send a clear warning to President Asad, Congressman Nunes co-sponsored the Syria Accountability Act, sponsored by Representative Ileana Ross-Lehtinen (R-FL). House Resolution 1828 provides Congressional authorization for sanctions against Syria.

The bill permits the President of the United States to determine if sanctions are appropriate through a certification process. If Syria were found to have ceased its support for terrorism, its occupation of Lebanon and development of weapons of mass destruction, sanctions would not be imposed.

Healthcare



As an original co-sponsor of the Medicare Prescription Drug and Modernization Act, Congressman Nunes sent a letter to the Medicare Conference Committee, requesting support for the Health Savings and Affordability Act of 2003.

The provisions of this act, contained in H.R. 2596, passed the House as part of Medicare reform discussions. The private health

Legislative work—cont.'d

accounts established by the Health Savings and Affordability Act provide millions of Americans with a tax-free savings opportunity for health expenses including deductibles, premiums, co-pays and other out-of-pocket expenses.

Honoring Events

Commemorating the special events taking place in the Sequoia/Kings Canyon National Park on August 23, 2003, Congressman Nunes submitted comments into the Congressional Record. Summary follows:

“Born in Kentucky during the Civil War to the parents of former slaves in 1864, Charles Young became only the third African-American to graduate from the United States Military Academy at West Point in 1889. Upon graduation, he was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant and assigned to the 10th U.S. Cavalry. In the year 1903, then Captain Charles Young was in charge of the 9th U.S. Cavalry and had been assigned the duty of “Acting Superintendent” of the Sequoia and General Grant National Parks. That early summer Captain Young led his “Buffalo Soldiers” out of the cold and fog shrouded Presidio in San Francisco en route to the high sierras of Central California. With this assignment, Captain Young not only became the first African American superintendent in the U.S. Park Service history but

also became the driving force in forging what would become today, one of the most visited and highly recognized parks in the world. During his tenure as superintendent, Colonel Young discovered and named a majestic Giant Sequoia after an individual that inspired and influenced his life, Booker T. Washington.”

Housing

Homeownership is an important part of the American Dream. All too often, this dream cannot be realized due to the costs of building, expensive down payments and mortgage insurance. Consequently, Congressman Nunes co-sponsored two bills that would help alleviate these costs and help more Americans become homeowners. The Renewing the Dream Tax Credit Act, H.R. 839, would bridge the gap between the cost of developing or rehabilitating a home and the price at which the home can be sold to low-income buyers. This would be done by offering homebuilders tax credits of up to 50 percent of the development costs as an incentive to build/rehabilitate homes in the more economically distressed areas. The other piece of legislation, would deliver some tax relief to these new homeowners. The Deductibility of Mortgage Insurance Act, H.R. 1336, would allow home-mortgage insurance premiums to be tax deductible.

Judicial



Abortion

As we all know, parental consent is required for numerous things, such as administering medication at school, ear piercing, and field trips. Many states have laws that require parental notification of their child receiving an abortion. As a pro-life advocate, Congressman Nunes co-sponsored H.R. 1489, the Parental Notification and Intervention Act. This legislation would create a federal law stating that no physician may perform an abortion on a minor unless that physician has given four days notice to both parents or the legal guardian of the minor. Furthermore, at any time either parent or guardian may object and stop the abortion.

Federal Law Enforcement Officers Pay

Congressman Nunes is a strong supporter of our federal law enforcement officers. Unfortunately, the salaries paid to federal agents pale in comparison to those paid to detectives in state and local police departments. This has hurt

many of the federal agencies from recruiting top-caliber academy graduates throughout the country, and especially in the San Joaquin Valley. In an effort to address this disparity Congressman Nunes has co-sponsored H.R. 466, the Federal Law Enforcement Locality Pay Adjustment Act. This legislation will ease the pay disparities for federal agents by increasing the locality pay adjustments. In addition, H.R. 466 will help all thirty-two federal pay districts—thus no longer excluding the San Joaquin Valley.

Methamphetamine

In an effort to increase funding for the methamphetamine fight in the San Joaquin Valley, Congressman Nunes, in a letter to Director John Walters of the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP), urged him to increase the base line budget of the Central Valley High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) by \$1.5 million. Furthermore, he requested that ONDCP

See next page

Legislative work—cont.'d

support the Central Valley HIDTA's application for \$1.375 million through the Consolidated Priority Operational Targets (CPOT) program which targets drug kingpins. This funding can be used to more effectively combat the production, use, and distribution of meth.

Telecommunications

In today's world of large media conglomerates and digital cable, it seems that many of the smaller more locally focused television stations are being edged out. Congressman Nunes feared that this would soon happen in the San Joaquin Valley unless something was done to stop this encroachment, so he became a co-sponsor of H.R. 1626, the Local Voices on TV Act. This legislation would increase the number of low power television (LPTV) stations that would be eligible to receive mandatory carriage by their local cable systems. It would also require that the cable system carry a LPTV station should there not be enough signals from the high power stations to fill the channels set aside for local programming.

Trade

Olives (Doha and Morocco Free Trade Agreement (FTA))

In an effort to keep United States Trade Representative Robert Zoellick informed about the San Joaquin Valley's interest in current trade negotiations, Congressman Nunes wrote to him to discuss issues of con-

cern to olive growers in relation to the Doha Development Agenda and the Morocco FTA.

International Shipping Rates

As someone from the San Joaquin Valley who has been involved with agriculture his whole life, Congressman Nunes understands how international shipping costs can hurt many businesses. The International Air Transport Association (IATA) has recently requested to raise airfreight-shipping rates for lower density cargo. This will significantly increase shipping costs and create burdens for most San Joaquin Valley businesses. Consequently, Congressman Nunes sent a letter to Secretary of Transportation, Norman Mineta, requesting that he refuse this request from IATA.

Veterans

Under current law, federal employees pay their health premiums on a pre-tax basis. As a matter of fairness, Congressman Nunes co-sponsored H.R. 1231, sponsored by Representative Tom Davis (R-V A), which will permit veterans participating in the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program to pay premiums on a pre-

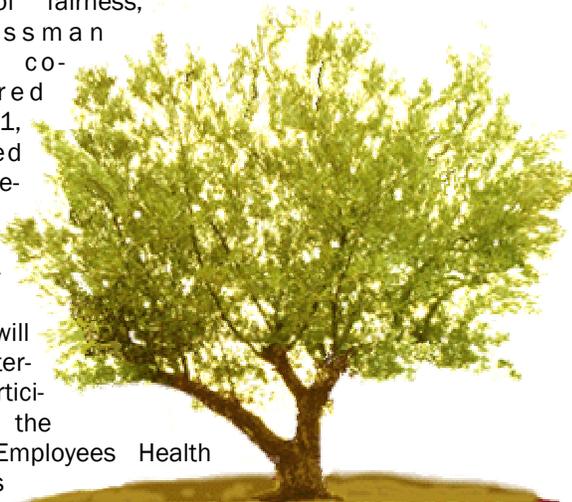
tax basis. The bill also will permit TRICARE recipients to deduct premiums and fees from their taxes.

Water

Colorado River

The core of the California Colorado River Plan is the Quantification Settlement Agreement (QSA), which will provide for the conservation and voluntary reallocation of Colorado River water within Southern California. However, despite months of intense negotiations, the Southern California water agencies that are parties to the QSA have thus far been unable to finalize the agreement.

Consequently, Congressman Nunes sent a letter to Secretary of the Interior Gale Norton asking her to delay the proposed reduction of water deliveries to Southern California to allow Interior and the California water agencies to devote their full energies to crafting a QSA compromise.



The facts about Head Start

I would like to take this opportunity to address some of the issues that have been raised about Congress' latest action on H.R. 2210, the School Readiness Act, which would reauthorize the Head Start program. I hope that this letter will clarify the intent of this legislation and my vote to support the changes to the Head Start program.

Many have expressed their concern that H.R. 2210 would move Head Start out of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and into the Department of Education. However, this is not the case and this legislation keeps Head Start within HHS where it belongs. Head Start has succeeded immensely under HHS and now is not the time to change.

Another issue that has been widely misrepresented is the five year "state demonstration project". Many have been lead to believe that such a project would dismantle Head Start by allowing states to integrate their own early-childhood education programs into the Head Start program, thereby solving some of the state budget problems. Unfortunately, vital information was left out of the discussion. The bill contains strong protections to ensure that all states who participate in the demonstration project provide services that are at least as strong, or stronger, than those in the existing Head Start program. Furthermore, some have claimed that the demonstration project is a block grant. However, a block grant, as defined in the American Heritage Dictionary, is an "unrestricted federal grant." In fact, the demonstration project comes with a number of key restrictions: demonstration states must increase their spending on pre-kindergarten programs; continue to provide comprehensive services; utilize existing high-quality Head Start grantees; and use all Head Start funds for Head Start-related purposes.

In all, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) retains federal oversight of the pilot program, and will conduct an independent evaluation of the project after three years. Furthermore, no state that has cut early childhood education will be eligible to participate in the demonstration project.

Having said all this, the demonstration project is limited to a total of eight states. Considering that California's early-childhood education has not met the outlined criteria, it is not eligible to participate in this program. Basically, **the Head Start program in California will not change.**

On another note, many have attacked this

legislation by saying that faith-based Head Start organizations should not be allowed to make hiring decisions ("discriminate") based on religion. However, for nearly 40 years, civil rights laws have protected the hiring rights of religious employers with the U.S. Supreme Court upholding the issue unanimously in 1987. Furthermore, faith-based groups have been receiving Federal money since 1996 when President Clinton signed the first of four "charitable choice" statutes without losing their hiring rights. Finally, faith-based organizations have a special interest in taking religion into account when making employment decisions. Just as an environmental group can hire persons who share its views on conservation, so too must a religious organization be able to take its religious views into account in making hiring decisions.

The final, and probably most important issue, is the confusion over funding levels for Head Start. Many have claimed that Congress intends to cut the funding for this key program. In fact, Congress is doing the exact opposite and intends to fund Head Start at \$6.87 billion in fiscal year 2004, an increase of over \$202 million from last year. Furthermore, the plan is to increase the funding steadily every year until 2008. On a significant issue for the San Joaquin Valley, I worked to guarantee \$17.2 million in funding for Migrant and Seasonal Head Start.

Honestly, I have to say that I supported the School Readiness Act because it strengthens the academic focus of Head Start, preserves Head Start's health and nutrition services, places an emphasis on proven early childhood education methods, and closes the "readiness gap" felt by so many San Joaquin Valley children. This legislation restructures Head Start to emphasize what works in preparing students for school – topics such as language, pre-reading, and pre-mathematics. Furthermore, this legislation seeks to improve teacher quality, by ensuring that Head Start teachers are adequately trained in early childhood education in order to meet the needs of our children.

I hope this information clears up any confusion about the recent actions of Congress on the Head Start program. Certainly, these are common-sense reforms that will allow Head Start to give thousands of low-income children the chance they need to succeed.

Darin Nunes

Quick Facts

Rep. Nunes and Rep. Richard Pombo with João Bosco Soares Moto Amaral, President of the Assembly of the Republic of Portugal and his delegation. (July 2003)

