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California Capitol Hill Bulletin

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To expand communications between Washington and California, the California Institute provides periodic news bulletins regarding current activity on Capitol Hill that directly impacts the state. Bulletins are published weekly during sessions of Congress, and occasionally during other periods.

SOCIAL SERVICES: CONGRESS SENDS HEAD START CONFERENCE REPORT TO PRESIDENT

On November 14, 2007, by a vote of 381-36, the House adopted the conference report on H.R. 1429, The Improving Head Start Act of 2007. The Senate followed later that day with a 95-0 vote to send the legislation to the President.

The Head Start program provides funding for early childhood development, health and social services programs for low-income children. The Act, as reported by the House Education and Labor Committee under the Chairmanship of Rep. George Miller (Martinez), includes measures to increase teacher pay, end national standardized testing of 4 and 5 year olds, expand eligibility to children whose family makes 130% of the federal poverty level, and mandate that by September 30, 2013, 50% of teachers teaching in center-based Head Start programs have a bachelor’s degree in childhood development or a related field.

Rep. Buck McKeon (Santa Clarita), ranking member of the Education and Labor Committee, spoke in support of the legislation. He said that the bi-partisan conference report before the House “strengthens and improves the Head Start early education program...and help[s] close the readiness gap in children before they enroll in school.” He also stated that it is “critical to strengthen financial controls” in order to “reduce future program breaches” in the funding process and to ensure that there is no abuse of taxpayer money. One of the measures included that addresses fiscal responsibility is a cap on the income of Head Start employees, set at \$168,000. Mr. McKeon closed by saying that this program “eases the divide between the have’s and the have-not’s.”

Rep. Lynn Woolsey (Petaluma) also spoke in support of the legislation saying that the Head Start program reaches children at a time that provides a “critical window of opportunity ...[to] level the playing field with other” students that may have greater opportunities. She said that the program helps children to understand the social structures associated with schools which will help to better prepare them for a learning environment. Despite her support for the bill, however, she still has concerns about the Administrations treatment of the program. Specifically, she would like to see an “increase in the Head Start program funding...because we aren’t covering every eligible child in the U.S.” She said the program is of the utmost importance to this nation because “children are 25% of our population, but 100% of our future.”

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California serves 106,605 children under 5 years old in its Head Start program. Of those children 7,668 of them are under 3 years old, and 5,211 children of the total enrollment are in the Migrational & Seasonal Head Start Program. In 2006, 37% of Head Start / Early Start Services in California were delivered by Public/Private Non-profits, followed by School Systems at 33%, and community action agencies at 13%.

For more information visit <http://www.house.gov> or <http://www.senate.gov>.

APPROPRIATIONS: HOUSE ADOPTS TRANSPH- HUD APPROPRIATIONS CONFERENCE REPORT

By a vote of 270-147, the House on November 14, 2007, adopted the Conference Report to accompany the FY 2008 appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies (H.R. 3074/H.Rpt.110-446). The bill provides over \$105 billion in funding, with \$50.9 billion in discretionary funding, \$3.4 billion more than last year and \$3 billion more than the President requested.. The Administration has indicated it will veto the bill because of its funding level.

In transportation funding, the bill provides \$40.2 billion for highway programs – \$631 million more than the President’s request; \$1.45 billion for Amtrak – \$550 million above the request; \$9.65 billion for transit programs – \$227 million more than the request; and \$14.6 billion for the FAA – is \$556 million above the request.

In response to the recent bridge collapse in Minnesota, the Conference Report also contains a provision that would finance added bridge inspections and maintenance by increasing the amount drawn from the highway trust fund by \$1 billion above the level set in the 2005 highway bill.

For housing programs, the Conferees would provide \$38.7 billion for the Housing and Urban Development Department – \$3.1 billion more than the President’s request. Included in that is \$3.8 billion for community development block grants (CDBG), and \$120 million for HOPE VI the public housing replacement program. The Administration had called for large cuts in the CDBG program and for the elimination of HOPE VI funding.

The bill also contains \$10 million for brownfields redevelopment efforts to evaluate and cleanup former commercial and industrial sites.

For further information, go to: <http://appropriations.house.gov>.

HIGHER EDUCATION: EDUCATION AND LABOR REPORTS THE COLLEGE AFFORDABILITY ACT OF 2007 TO THE FLOOR

On Thursday, November 15, 2007, by a vote of 44-0, the House Education and Labor Committee approved HR 4137, a five-year reauthorization of the Higher Education Act that would reform and strengthen the nation’s higher education programs to ensure that they operate in the best interests of students and families.

The Act, entitled the College Opportunity and Affordability Act of 2007, is sponsored by Rep. George Miller (Martinez), the Committee Chair. He commented: “Congress has already enacted legislation this year to provide an

additional \$20 billion in financial aid for students and families over the next five years... This legislation will build on that effort by reducing or eliminating many of the obstacles that prevent fully qualified students from going to college.”

Ranking Member Buck McKeon (Santa Clarita), who also supported the legislation, said the “Act reflects the bipartisan consensus that has emerged about the need to rein in rising college costs and give students, parents, and taxpayers more and better information about colleges and universities...As this bill moves to the House floor, we will continue working to strengthen its protections for students and taxpayers and enhance its recognition of the changing needs of an increasingly diverse and mobile college population.”

The Act would increase the maximum authorized Pell grant for low-income college students from \$5,800 to \$9,000 per year, and would allow the grants to be used year-round. The Act also creates the “higher education price index,” which will allow parents, students, and other interested parties to compare tuition increases over time at various colleges and universities. Institutions that show a particularly sharp increase in tuition would be placed on a government “watch list.”

Other provisions of the bill include measures to: increase the amount of information that schools and lenders are required to provide students upon enrollment about the long-term costs of college; bar student loan lenders from giving schools financial aid funds or any other perks to get on a “preferred lender” list; and allow the federal government to penalize states that substantially reduce their financial commitment to colleges and universities. States that don’t meet the average State spending in the five preceding years can potentially be penalized by losing matching federal grants.

Additional key provisions of the Act are as follows:

- Streamline the federal student financial aid application process;
- Strengthen college readiness programs;
- Increase college aid and support programs for veterans and military families;
- Improve safety on college campuses and help schools recover and rebuild after a disaster;
- Ensure equal college opportunities and fair learning environments for students with

disabilities; and

- Strengthen the nation’s workforce and economic competitiveness by boosting science, technology, and foreign language educational opportunities.

Significant amendments adopted during the Committee mark up are as follows:

- By a 24-16 vote, the Committee adopted an amendment by Rep. Jason Altmire (Pa.), to create a grant program that would partner colleges with local businesses to help the schools prepare students for specific in-demand jobs.

- By a 29-15 vote, the Committee adopted an amendment that would give change the TRIO program that helps low-income students prepare for college by giving TRIO applicants a right to appeal if they are denied grant funding by the Department of Education.

- By voice vote, the Committee adopted an amendment that would require federally-approved college accrediting firms to “respect” the mission of religious schools when renewing an institution’s accreditation.

For more information visit <http://edlabor.house.gov/> .

WATER: RESOURCES COMMITTEE REPORTS CALIFORNIA BILLS

The House Resources Committee held a markup on November 15, 2007 to consider several California bills: H.R. 4074 (Rep. Jim Costa (Fresno)); H.R. 123 (Rep. David Dreier (San Dimas)); and H.R. 236 (Rep. Mike Thompson (St. Helena)).

H.R. 4074 authorizes the implementation of the San Joaquin River Restoration Settlement Act. During its consideration, the Committee rejected three amendments before approving the bill by a vote of 25-15.

H.R. 123 authorizes appropriations for the San Gabriel Basin Restoration Fund. During consideration, the Committee accepted by unanimous consent an amendment in the nature of a substitute offered by Rep. Grace Napolitano (Norwalk), before favorably reporting the bill to the House by unanimous consent.

H.R. 236, the "North Bay Water Reuse Program Act of 2007," authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to create a Bureau of Reclamation partnership with the North Bay Water Reuse Authority and other regional partners to achieve objectives relating to water supply, water quality, and environmental restoration. Again, the Committee accepted by unanimous consent an amendment in the nature of a substitute offered by Rep. Grace Napolitano (Norwalk), before favorably reporting the bill to the House by unanimous consent.

For more information, go to: <http://resourcescommittee.house.gov> .

IMMIGRATION: HOUSE JUDICIARY SUBCOMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION HEARS TESTIMONY ON REFORM BILL

On November 8, 2007, the House Judiciary Subcommittee on Immigration, Citizenship, Refugees, Border Security, and International Law, chaired by Rep. Zoe Lofgren (San Jose) held a hearing on H.R. 750, the "Save America Comprehensive Immigration Act of 2007. The Subcommittee heard from a number of witnesses, including: Rep. Barbara Lee (Oakland), a co-sponsor of the bill; Kim Gandy, President, National Organization for Women (NOW); T. J. Bonner, President, National Border Patrol Council of the American Federation of Government Employees, AFL-CIO; and Julie Kirchner, Director of Government Relations, Federation for American Immigration Reform.

Congresswoman Lee, in her position as Co-Chair of the Congressional Progressive Caucus, laid out the Caucus's principles on immigration reform, which are:

- "a clear legal path to permanent residency and citizenship for all the millions of undocumented workers and their immediate families;
- a policy that works to unite families and not to separate children from their parents;
- a system that is timely and straightforward without charging excessive fees or fines that are out of the reach for immigrant families;
- the ability for children to pursue an education, and have access to student loans and in-state tuition;
- a system that minimizes mandatory and indefinite detention of non-citizens and safeguards the Universal Human Rights of every person;
- a plan that provides for the equitable and non-discriminatory enforcement of laws that does not make first responders like firemen and police into immigration agents;
- encouragement for employers to hire citizens and legal residents first, but does not make them into immigration officers either; and
- a strong and sensible border security plan to ensure the safety of our country."

Also, as Vice-Chair of the Congressional Black Caucus, Rep. Lee stated that the Caucus supports a "pathway for earned access to citizenship that focuses on the reunification of families and provides a pathway for permanency for every immigrant in America."

Ms. Kirchner, on the other hand, rejected H.R. 750 as containing many provisions whose impact "would indeed be severe and continue for generations to come." Specifically, FAIR objects to expanding family reunification, which under the bill would double the annual number of family-based immigrant visas from 480,000 to 960,000. In addition, she testified, the bill contains what FAIR considers to be four amnesty provisions, including the earned access to legalization, and a modified DREAM Act to legalize undocumented immigrant children who continue their education. Ms. Kirchner did note that the bill contains several border security provisions that FAIR supports, including increasing the number of border patrol agents by 15,000 over the next five years. However, it feels that some of the bill's provisions effectively eviscerate improvements made in interior enforcement over the last several years.

For the testimony of all the witnesses, go to: <http://judiciary.house.gov> .

ENERGY: HOUSE OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE INVESTIGATES EPA APPROVAL PROCEDURES FOR NEW POWER PLANTS

On Thursday, November 8, 2007, the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee held a hearing to address the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) approval of new power plants. The Committee called the hearing, entitled "EPA Approval of New Power Plants: Failure To Address Global Warming Pollutants," to examine the implications of the EPA's refusal to consider the global warming effects of a coal-fired power plant's greenhouse gas emissions in a recent permitting decision.

Rep. Henry Waxman (Los Angeles), Chairman of the Committee, strongly objected to the approval of the power plants in question. In a prepared statement, Mr. Waxman stated that: "The Administration's policy is the climate equivalent of pouring gasoline on a fire. The approval of new power plants without carbon controls is irresponsible; it is indefensible; and it is illegal." He went on to say, "while we struggle to develop the right policies for reducing our emissions, we should not be making our problems worse by approving a new generation of unregulated coal-fired power plants."

The primary witness testimony was given by The Honorable Stephen L. Johnson, Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency, and Mr. David Doniger, Policy Director, Climate Center, Natural Resources Defense Council.

Mr. Johnson testified that following a recent Supreme Court decision, "EPA has been looking at the authority provided by the Clean Air Act as part of its efforts to achieve this global goal of reduced greenhouse gas emissions." He maintained that there was no failure to address greenhouse gas emissions because "consistent with applicable regulations, EPA's permit requires the new unit to meet the lowest emissions rates that can be achieved for this type of source under the circumstances." He continued to argue that it was not necessary to limit CO₂ emissions from these coal-burning plants because implementing necessary regulations and technology "would amount, impermissibly, to redefining the source."

Mr. Johnson further argued that "the Court did not answer whether the Agency *must* regulate greenhouse gas emissions... The Supreme Court's decision did not automatically turn greenhouse gases into regulated pollutants." Therefore, he argued, "[i]t is up to me, as EPA Administrator" to make that decision.

Mr. Doniger held the opposing view. He testified that "the Massachusetts decision confirmed greenhouse gases, such as carbon dioxide emitted from powerplants, are 'air pollutants' under the Clean Air Act...CO₂ is now unambiguously an air pollutant, and it is clearly 'subject to regulation.'" Clean Air Act Section 165 requires the EPA to conduct an analysis of the best available control technology and establish appropriate emissions limitations. He contends that "if these analyses were performed, the EPA would be forced to conclude that the new coal-fired power plants pose a grave threat to public health and the environment, and mitigation strategies must be adopted before any program can move forward."

For more information visit <http://oversight.house.gov/story.asp?ID=1599> .

DISASTERS: HOUSE PASSES DISASTER INSURANCE BILL

On November 8, 2007, the House passed H.R. 3355, by a vote of 258-155. The bill aims at making available affordable homeowners' insurance in disaster-prone states.

The Homeowners' Defense Act of 2007 creates a national catastrophic program which is intended "to stabilize the catastrophe insurance market by expanding private industries capacity to cover a natural disaster and helping states to better manage risk," according to the House Financial Services Committee, from which the bill was reported. The bill provides an avenue for state insurance funds to voluntarily bundle their catastrophe risk with other states, and then transfer that risk to the private markets through the

use of catastrophe bonds and reinsurance contracts. The bill also establishes the National Homeowners Insurance Stabilization Program under the Treasury Department, which can provide loans to any state that faces a significant financial shortfall following a natural catastrophe.

This is the first national disaster insurance legislation to ever pass the House. The Senate has not considered the bill, and the Administration opposes the provision creating a federally-backed consortium to allow states to pool catastrophe risk, on the basis that it implicitly sets up a federal guarantee of the financial risks.

For more information, go to: <http://financialservices.house.gov> .

CLIMATE: SENATE ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE HOLDS SECOND HEARING ON AMERICA'S CLIMATE CHANGE AND SECURITY ACT OF 2007

On Monday, November 13, 2007, the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, chaired by Sen. Barbara Boxer, held the second in a series of hearings on "America's Climate Change and Security Act of 2007 (S. 2191)." The bill has been marked up already by the Consumer Solutions to Global Warming and Wildlife Protection Subcommittee.

Chairwoman Boxer, in her opening statement, reaffirmed that the "legislation before [the committee] provides a strong framework for global warming action." She also reaffirmed her commitment to a "deliberate and transparent process", and promised to "continue to work on this legislation in consultation with stakeholders, members, and staff as we proceed ahead." She also echoed her sentiments from last week about the importance of taking up this legislation and addressing these issues now. She said that "by facing this challenge now, we can maximize our chances of avoiding the most dangerous effects of climate change. We will also position America to capitalize on the tremendous opportunities that lie ahead."

The primary witness testimony was given by David Hawkins, Director of the Climate Center for the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), and Robert Baugh, Executive Director, Industrial Union Council, AFL-CIO.

Mr. Hawkins testified that "a growing body of scientific research indicates that we face extreme dangers to human health, economic well-being, and the ecosystems on which we depend if global average temperatures are allowed to increase by more than 2 degrees Fahrenheit from today's levels. We have good prospects of staying below this temperature increase if atmospheric concentrations of CO₂ and other global warming gases are kept from exceeding 450 ppm CO₂-equivalent and then rapidly reduced. To make this possible requires immediate steps to reduce global emissions over the next several decades, including action to halt U.S. emissions growth within the next few years and then cut emissions by approximately 80% by mid-Century. This goal is ambitious, but achievable...[I]f we delay and emissions continue to grow at or near the business-as-usual trajectory for another 10 years, the job will become much harder."

Mr Hawkins also made specific reference to the dangers faced by California : "In the West... climate change is expected to alter precipitation patterns and snow pack, thereby increasing dry fuel loads and the risk of forest fires. Forest fires cost billions of dollars to suppress, and can result in significant loss of property. The Oakland, California fire of 1991 and the fires in San Diego and San Bernardino Counties in 2003 each cost over \$2 billion. Every year for the past four years, over 7 million acres of forests in the National Forest System have burned with annual suppression costs of \$1.3 billion or more."

Mr. Baugh testified that the AFL-CIO is supportive of many aspects of the current legislation. It believes that America needs an energy policy for the 21st Century that will result in a cleaner planet, greater energy efficiency and the revitalization of our manufacturing base. It is an opportunity for our nation to prove that economic development and environmental progress can and should go hand-in-hand, Baugh said. The AFL-CIO is particularly interested in working with the committee to craft an effective "cap-and-trade" system that "addresses the environmental health of the planet while assuring that good

paying jobs are not sacrificed to overseas competition.” He suggested that the legislation be more explicit about its interest in economic development. He asserted that the “legislation needs to make explicit the implicit economic development goals embodied in the bill’s investment strategy and its stated purpose of ‘preserving robust growth.’ It is in the national interest to assure that the investment dollars generated by this legislation are reinvested in our domestic economy.”

For more information visit <http://www.epw.senate.gov> .

CLIMATE: SENATE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE HOLDS THIRD HEARING ON AMERICAS CLIMATE SECURITY ACT OF 2007

On Thursday, November 15, 2007, the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee held its third in a series of hearings on America’s Climate Security Act of 2007, S. 2191. (See related article in this Bulletin.) Senator Barbara Boxer, Committee Chair, to respond to criticism that she is attempting to move the legislation too quickly, has ordered an Impact Report from the Environmental Protection Agency and the Energy Information Administration, and will compile a list of the over 20 hearings held on the issue of global warming since January, she said. She argued: “[I] could take another year on this and don’t think I will get another vote.” She affirmed that she would move forward in the manner necessary to take the appropriate actions despite the detractors. “I know when it’s a sincere call for more information and when it’s just delay,” she said. She insisted that states and cities are taking action, and that it is time for Congress to act on this issue.

The primary testimony for this hearing was delivered by Mr. Fred Krupp, President, Environmental Defense; The Honorable Eileen Claussen, President, Pew Center on Global Climate Change; and Christopher Berendt, Director, Environmental Markets and Policy, Pace.

Mr. Krupp testified to the urgency associated with enacting this legislation, saying that “if we delay two (2) years, we would have to reach twice the rate of reduction each year [from 2%-4%] to reach our goal.” He said that his group would support certain improvements to the bill, such as addressing mercury, nitric oxide and carbon monoxide pollution as well. However, Environmental Defense “sees time running out...We support this bill getting out of this committee in it’s current form.” He also highlighted the fact that acting now will have the greatest global impact. “The faster we act, the faster China will act...[and] the easier it will be on [our] economy.”

Ms. Claussen testified that this legislation “allows us to address this problem in a cost-effective manner.” She went on to say that PEW favors the economy-wide approach embraced by the bill, and that the Act “will enhance America’s competitiveness.” The legislation would be improved, she argued, if the “allowance allocation process” addressed the “legitimate transition costs” that some industry’s will inevitably face.

Mr. Berendt testified that the Act does not embody sound economic fundamentals. He cautioned that adoption of the Act would severely limit, if not halt completely, the construction of coal plants, “forsaking our most abundant [energy producing] natural resource.” This would create a situation where the “only generational resources are renewables and natural gas.” If that were to become the case, the U.S. “would not be able to meet the necessary generational capacity to serve it’s growing population.” According to Mr. Berendt, this would leave the country “highly reliant on natural gas,” and we do not have a sustainable natural gas supply. As a result, “future imports will come from unstable natural gas supplies...exposing us to more volatility and instability.” He believes that the potential outcome, should these concerns be realized, is a negative impact on our energy security and an over reliance on natural gas. Mr. Krupp agreed that to reach the goals of the legislation we would “need to increase our supplies of liquified natural gas.”

For more information visit <http://epw.senate.gov/public/> .

EDUCATION: RAND PUBLISHES REPORTS ON CALIFORNIA PRESCHOOL STUDY

The RAND Corporation recently released two reports on early educational attainment in California's pre-schools. The two reports, "*Who is Ahead and Who is Behind? Gaps in School Readiness and Student Achievement in the Early Grades for California School Children,*" and "*Early Care and Education in the Golden State: Publicly Funded Programs Serving California's Pre-School Age Children,*" come at a crucial time for education policy in California. Governor Schwarzenegger declared 2008 "The Year of Education Reform," and members of the California state legislature are eager to address the problems in legislative solutions that will be introduced in January 2008.

The reports, commissioned by the Governor's Office for Educational Excellence, the Senate President Pro Tempore, the Speaker of the Assembly, and the Superintendent of Public Instruction, seek to assess existing programs and make policy recommendations for improving areas where there were deficiencies found.

"*Who's Ahead and Who's Behind,*" which addresses the primary concerns of the series, seeks to address the following questions:

- What is the number and percentage of students in grades K-3 who do not meet state education standards?

- How does the fraction that fails to meet standards vary across groups defined by gender, race-ethnicity, English-language ability, parent education attainment, and family economic status?

- Do high-quality preschool programs have the potential to close the observed achievement gaps?

The key findings of the study indicate that "despite rising achievement levels in recent years, California still has a long way to go before second and third graders reach proficiency in English-language arts and mathematics as defined in California's education content standards." The most glaring statistic presented in this category shows that "52 percent of second-grade students and 63 percent of third-grade students did not achieve grade-level proficiency in English-language arts. The equivalent percentages for math performance in the same grades were somewhat better but still quite high at 41 and 42 percent."

The findings further indicate that there are large differences between groups, categorized by race/ethnicity, socioeconomic background, gender, and English language proficiency. According to the report, "English learners and students whose parents did not graduate from high school have the highest proportion who fall short of proficiency. Nearly 70 percent of these students do not meet second-grade proficiency standards in English-language arts, and about 85 percent do not meet third-grade standards. Between 53 and 58 percent do not meet math proficiency standards in those grades." Percentages of black and Hispanic students falling short of proficiency in second and third grades are also high, as are those of economically disadvantaged students.

The study also demonstrated that the students who start behind and stay behind include English learners, students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, Hispanics, and blacks.

"*Early Care and Education in the Golden State*" takes a further look into the actual early care and education (ECE) programs being offered to students, their funding sources, and their effectiveness at, and accountability to, meeting California's established achievement standards. It seeks to answer the following questions:

- What federal, state, and local funding streams currently fund ECE programs for California children one or two years before kindergarten entry?

- What are the eligibility requirements for these programs and how are children enrolled?

- How many children are eligible, how many children participate, and what fraction of eligible children is served?

- What requirements for service delivery are maintained for these programs and how do those requirements relate to benchmarks for high-quality programs?

- How are programs funded and providers reimbursed? How much funding is available, and do the reimbursement mechanisms provide an incentive to deliver high-quality programs?

- Are there inefficiencies within or across programs in terms of funding streams, program eligibility, service delivery, and program administration?

Some of the key findings of this study are that the California system of ECE is complex with many different, and sometimes conflicting, motivations. According to the report, "California's system of publicly subsidized ECE programs for preschool-age children has evolved over time into a complex array of programs, supported through multiple funding streams, that primarily serve targeted populations of children. This divergence in motivations means some programs have more extensive requirements for delivering developmentally appropriate care but often on a part-day basis that does not meet the needs of employed parents, while other programs focus on parental choice and flexibility in arrangements at the expense of imposing requirements on the services providers offer."

The report notes specifically that despite the fact that not programs are targeted at certain groups, not all eligible children are served. For example, "about 53 percent of eligible four-year-olds and 25 percent of eligible three-year-olds were served by child development-oriented programs...These participation rates translate into sizeable gaps between the number of children eligible and the number of children served."

The report further notes that despite regulations on the settings in which pre-school age children are served, the quality of the programs administered and their ability to prepare children to meet achievement standards are unclear. Specifically, "for the 81 percent of preschool-age children in subsidized care that are in developmentally focused settings, the extensive regulatory requirements do not guarantee that the programs provide the quality of care associated with effective preschool programs." The report also highlights a funding concern, noting that the existing funding mechanism for ECE programs provides "little incentive for raising quality."

For more information visit <http://www.rand.org> .

DEMOGRAPHICS: PPIC REPORTS ON CALIFORNIA BIRTH AND FERTILITY TRENDS

On Friday, November 16, 2007, the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) released a report entitled "Birth Rates in California." Written by Hans Johnson, an associate director of research at PPIC, the report tracks birth rates and fertility in the state and analyzes their effects on population. The study finds that "over the last two decades, California has experienced an accelerating trend in delayed childbearing...A growing percentage of women are giving birth in their early forties, while a much lower percentage of teenagers are becoming mothers. Despite the rise in birth rates among older women, trends in childlessness are also increasing."

According to PPIC, Californians should care about these issues because they put into context the changes in the size and make-up of the state's population. The trends revealed that prior to the 1990s, over half of the state's population increase could be directly attributed to migration. Since 1990, natural increase has dominated the state's growth. Population projections suggest that this will continue to be the case, with about two-thirds of the growth over the next 20 years due to natural increase.

Furthermore, the report contends that "because most children born in the state do not move away from California . . . fertility patterns have immediate implications for programs and policies focused on children, including, perhaps most importantly, the number of children in the state's K-12 school system."

The report includes trends of fertility based on ethnic group and nativity, among other things. One interesting point is that the birth rate among Latinas is "particularly important because Latinas make up a large and growing share California's women." Another finding is that women with higher levels of education are more likely to remain childless.

According to the report's finding, the teen birth rate in 2006 was the lowest ever recorded in the State's history.

The report concludes that "changes in the number of births in the near future will occur primarily as a result of changes in the number of women of childbearing age, rather than dramatic changes in fertility."

For more information or to download a copy of the report, visit www.ppic.org .