

ProLiteracy Policy Update

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Level Funding Restored for State Grants for Adult Basic Education and Literacy Programs

On June 6, the House Appropriations Sub-Committee for Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies took the adult education and literacy field by surprise when it restored level funding for state grants for adult basic education to its fiscal 2006 education appropriations bill. The mark up included \$570 million in funds for state grants for adult basic education and literacy programs, approximately the same as the current fiscal 2005 funding level.

Insiders in Washington attribute the change in direction to the volume of correspondence received by Sub-Committee members from adult literacy practitioners and students. Sub-Committee members were also impressed by the number of Representatives who signed on to the House Dear Colleague letter (see Public Policy Alert dated April 7, 2005) and/or contacted members of the Sub-Committee to voice their support.

The next step in the appropriations process is action by the full House Appropriations Committee on the Sub-Committee recommendations, slated for June 16. Once the full Appropriations Committee has taken action on the bill, it will go to the House floor for vote, anticipated before the Fourth of July recess.

In the meantime, the Senate Appropriations Sub-Committee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies has begun its work on its version of the education appropriations bill. The Senate education appropriations process is anticipated to result in a floor vote not sooner than mid-August. If the Senate and House bills are different, the bills will be sent to a conference committee for negotiation and resolution.

In related news, the House Sub-Committee also restored partial funding for Even Start, which the Congressional Budget Resolution passed on April 28 “zeroed out.” The House Sub-Committee mark up allocated \$200 million for Even Start, a \$25 million cut. Family literacy advocates are calling for increased advocacy on behalf of this funding stream.