

Cheers for Head Start

I commend our congressional delegation, Rep. Denny Rehberg, Sen. Jon Tester and Sen. Max Baucus, for increasing funding in fiscal year 2012 for the federal early education program, Head Start. Montana is fortunate to have had all three of our delegation supporting investing in early learning, which isn't just good for our kids — it's also good for business.

As a member of the business leaders organization, America's Edge, I've seen research that shows that investments in high-quality early education programs have a substantial and immediate impact on local businesses and the economy. In Montana, every \$1 invested generates an additional \$1.61 in spending of local goods and services, favorable when compared to other sectors like transportation, construction or farming, forestry, fishing and hunting.

Early learning also helps prepare a future skilled workforce. Children who participate in these programs are more likely to have higher graduation rates, earn more as adults and enter the workforce with the skills businesses seek, especially in our increasingly technology-driven world. In the long term, that means lower unemployment rates and higher contributions to the tax base.

To its credit, with the support of our three congressional leaders, Congress has taken steps to improve the quality of Head Start programs so children can fully realize the benefits of these programs. This is a win-win investment — good for children and good for our economy, now and in the future.

Thanks Denny, Jon and Max for a job well done.

Edward Mangis
Helena

