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## **Press Release - Muskie Urges Renewed Commitment to Head Start, Other OEO Programs**

Edmund S. Muskie

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# MUSKIE

Maine

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FOR RELEASE

MUSKIE URGES RENEWED COMMITMENT TO HEAD START, OTHER OEO PROGRAMS NOV 18 1970

Calling for a "renewed commitment to improving opportunities for all Americans," Senator Edmund S. Muskie (D-Maine) today announced his co-sponsorship of an amendment which would increase appropriations for the Office of Economic Opportunity.

Senator Muskie said that "programs like Head Start and manpower training which have proved successful should be expanded, not cut back." He also indicated his belief that even the increase he supports "is inadequate to fill present needs.

"The Administration requested \$339 million for Head Start. But it is clear that to keep the program running at even its present level, a minimum of \$398 million will be needed," Mr. Muskie said.

"The last segment of society to fall victim to the slash of the budget-cutter should be our children," the Senator added. "Head Start is a program that has given renewed hope to hundreds of thousands of youngsters all across America.

"In my own State of Maine, there are presently 15 Head Start programs helping over one thousand children. Now is not the time to deny them the benefits of pre-school development.

"Instead of dropping children from the program, we should be adding children. Instead of cutting corners here, we should be building Head Start into the kind of constructive national program it has shown itself capable of being.

"If the appropriations which passed the House of Representatives are not increased, 26,000 children who are presently enrolled in Head Start will have to be dropped. That would be a tragedy that we simply cannot afford.

"There are some 6 million disadvantaged children under six years old in America. Yet Head Start enrolls only one-quarter of a million. We are helping less than one in 20 of the children who most need our help.

"There can be no excuse for our not doing a better job in this area. We have a proven, workable program, and we have millions of children who can benefit from that program. We should bring the children and the program together.

"Some say this issue has become embroiled in politics," Senator Muskie added. "There are some things that must be more important than politics. The lives of our children must be more important than politics."

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