

Virginia Head Start Association Parent Ambassador Trip

Washington, DC - January 28 – 31, 2019

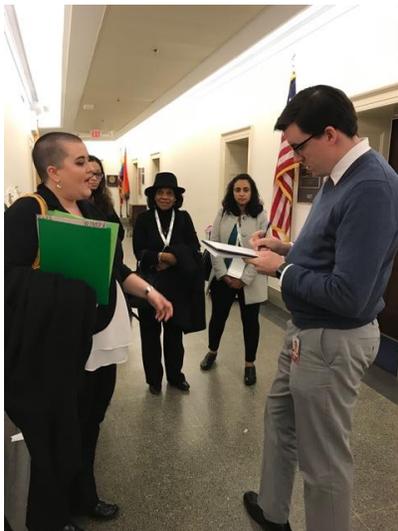
It was an exciting trip as some had never been on a train, Metro, or in a cab before! Coming from **Hillsville, Roanoke, and Jarratt**, the parents each represented a different region in our VA Head Start community, therefore each representing a different Congressional District.



The Parent Ambassadors waiting to board an Amtrak with Executive

Director, Dawn Ault.

They attended the NHSA Winter Leadership Institute for a variety of workshops related to Head Start, including workshops focused on the themes of: Today's Political Climate, Leadership Through Change, Standing Up for Parents in the Revised Performance Standards, What to Expect from Your Congressional Visits, and a Parent Advocacy "Meet Up" session, just to name a few.



They were able to meet with many legislators and thank them for the bipartisan support for Head Start funding, *especially referring to the FY16 Omnibus Appropriations Bill that was passed in December 2015 awarding Head Start with a \$570 million increase.* Parents told their personal stories of how Head Start has impacted their families' lives.

Congressmen were able to hear from Cathlene, from Rooftop of VA CAP, about the importance of her home-based model for services, while also sharing some of her goals outlined in the Family Partnership Agreement. Head Start's mission and wonderful, caring staff from her local agency, Total Action for Progress (TAP), were credited for helping Pam become a first-time homebuyer. Tywanda shared how she became very engaged in Policy Council and ended up being hired by her agency, The Improvement Association. They also shared success stories of early identification of special needs or vision impairments of their children due to Head Start's

comprehensive screenings. The list of important ways that Head Start has impacted children and families goes on! It was an impactful experience to talk with legislators personally, to answer their questions, and to thank them for their continued support for funding.

(Right) Alex Payne, Legislative Assistant to Rep Bobby Scott (D-03) started the day with insightful conversations about Head Start and the NPRM.



*Cathlene Hernandez from Rooftop with her district's representative, Congressman Griffith (R-09). (Left)
 Pam Borders from TAP with her district's representative, Congressman Goodlatte (R-06). (Center)
 Tywanda Smith with her district's representative, Congressman Forbes (R-04). (Right)
 A group picture after a great conversation with Congressman Forbes and his Legislative Assistant Chris Maneval. (Below)
 Not pictured: Our meetings with the offices of Wittman (R-01), Brat (R-07), & Rigell (R-02).*