

Public Policy Notes

Southern Early Childhood Association

Midterm 2014: *The Crystal Ball*



In 1998, the *Center for Politics*

(a non-partisan unit) of the University of Virginia was created by **Dr. Larry Sabato**. Its mission is to “*promote the value of politics and the importance of civic engagement. Government works better when politics works better, and politics works better when citizens are informed and involved participants.*”

Since that time, Dr. Sabato and the Center have been internationally recognized for an unbiased analysis of politics and the potential impact of politics and elections on American governance.

Sabato's Crystal Ball, a comprehensive website run by the University of Virginia's *Center for Politics*, “features detailed and frequently updated analysis for elections across the country. The *Crystal Ball* keeps tabs on presidential elections, along with every Senate and gubernatorial

race, as well as the tightest campaigns for the House. The *Crystal Ball* has been a leader in accurately predicting elections since its inception.....In 2006 the Pew Research Center and the Pew Charitable Trusts' Project for Excellence in Journalism recognized the *Crystal Ball* as the leader in the field of political predictors, noting that the site “came closer than any other of the top ten potential predictors this cycle.” According to the website, predictions for the mid-term elections are:

Senate

48 seats are safe/likely/leaning for Democrats

49 seats are safe/likely/leaning for Republicans

3 seats are toss-ups

Final Prediction: Republicans will gain between 4 & 8 seats in the Senate.

House

193 seats are safe/likely/leaning for Democrats

232 seats are

safe/likely/leaning for Republicans

10 seats are toss-ups

Final Prediction: Republicans will gain between 5 to 8 seats in the House.

Governors

20 offices are safe/likely/leaning for Democrats

26 offices are safe/likely/leaning for Republicans

4 are toss-ups

Final Prediction: Democrats will gain 1 to 3 gubernatorial offices.

These early predictions call for a potential shift in the power structure in Congress, with both houses having a Republican majority if the party gains 6 seats in the Senate. **You can sign up for free updates on their predictions and research at**

<http://www.centerforpolitics.org/crystalball/>

April 2014

Volume 7, Issue 4

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The Congressional Recess: Did You Connect with Your Senator or Representative?

Congress has been out of session for its regular spring recess. Did you take advantage of the opportunity to personally talk with your Representative/Senator or to attend a meeting which they attended? This recess will conclude on April 28th. A recess is a perfect time to make that “one on one” contact.....don't lose the opportunity!

Some Things to Note

Mitt Romney Back on the National Stage?

This June, **Mitt Romney** will host



his third annual policy summit in Park City, Utah. An event designed to introduce potential presidential contenders to Republican supporters and financiers and to discuss policy issues for Republicans, the 2014 summit will include possible presidential candidates Governor Chris Christie, former Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee, Representative Paul Ryan and Senator Rand Paul.

The retreat is being billed as a non-partisan event and includes Sacramento mayor Kevin Johnson, a Democrat and visible supporter of President Obama in 2012. *Source: Policy Summit has a Nonprofit/School Choice Side, Nonprofit Quarterly, <http://www.nonprofitquarterly.org>*

A New Report from the Rand Corporation



Using Early Childhood Education to Bridge the Digital Divide has just been released by the Rand

Corporation and suggests that incorporating ICT (information and communication technology) into early childhood education programs could help bridge the technology gap for disadvantaged students. If you'd like a free copy of the report, it's available at <http://www.rand.org/pubs/perspectives/PE119.html>

Gubernatorial Elections in Texas and South Carolina



Abbott



Davis

Both states are gearing up for gubernatorial elections this fall. Governor Rick Perry of Texas is term limited and the election will be decided between Republican Attorney General Greg Abbott and Democratic Senator Wendy Davis. According to Rasmussen Reports, Abbott leads Davis by 12 points. If this holds, Republicans will maintain the Governor's Office in Texas.

Sheheen



Haley

Incumbent Governor Nikki Haley (R) of South Carolina is running against Vincent Sheheen (D), a member of the South Carolina

Senate. According to Rasmussen Reports, Haley leads Sheheen by a margin of 52% to 37%. Again, these are initial poll numbers but if they hold, the Governor's office in South Carolina will remain Republican. *Source: Election 2014, Rasmussen Reports, <http://www.rasmussenreports.com>*

Website for NC Early Childhood Foundation Goes On-line

One of the newest contributors to the discussion around the importance of early childhood education, the **North Carolina Early Childhood Foundation** was launched in 2013 and now has a website available. According to the website, "The mission of the North Carolina Early Childhood Foundation (NCECF) is to marshal North Carolina's great people, ideas and achievements to build a foundation of opportunity and success for every child by the end of third grade. We work to build public will, accelerate what works and ignite action that closes the achievement gap and raises outcomes for all young children." For a look at the website, go to <http://nearlychildhoodfoundation.org/>

Early Childhood Programs Help to Prevent Adult Chronic Disease

A new report from famed economist **James Heckman** shows that quality early childhood programs help prevent adult chronic disease, such as diabetes and stroke. The report, published in March 2014, was based on studies of children in and out of the Abecedarian program in North Carolina.

For more information, go to <https://www.heckmanequation.org/>

The War on Poverty: 50 Years Later

"Forty-nine years ago, Lyndon Johnson declared war on poverty. In 1964, he said, "We have declared unconditional war on poverty. Our objective is total victory." Later that year, he added, "I believe that thirty years from now Americans will look back upon these 1960s as the time of the great American Breakthrough . . . the victory of prosperity over poverty."

Since then, we've spent over \$15 trillion in that war. So what do we have to show for it? Well, today 46 million people live in poverty. And 20 million Americans live on less than half of the poverty level. For too many families, the American Dream is out of reach.

Now that's partly because of the recession. But even as the economy picks up steam, millions of families are falling behind. And many communities have been hurting for years—well before the recession hit. The fact is, we're losing the War on Poverty. And we need to know why."

With that opening statement,

Congressman Paul Ryan, Chairman of the House Budget Committee, opened on July 31, 2013 the first of a series of Budget Committee hearings on the status of the War on Poverty after 50 years.

The first hearing entitled, *The War on Poverty: A Progress Report*. Testimony for this hearing can be found at <http://budget.house.gov/hearingschedule2013/hearing7312013.htm>

In March 2014, a report entitled, *The War on Poverty: 50 Years Later* was released and Congressman Ryan opened with these remarks: "For too long, we have measured compassion by how much we spend instead of how many people get out of poverty. We need to take a hard look at what the federal government is doing and ask, 'Is this working?'"

This report will help start the conversation. It shows that some programs work; others don't. And for many of them, we just don't know. Clearly, we can do better. We can rework these



federal programs and help families in need lead lives of dignity.

"So in a spirit of reform, this report hopes to inform the public debate. This 50th anniversary of the War on Poverty is an opportunity to review the record in full. And we should seize it." **For a copy of the report, go to <http://budget.house.gov/waronepoverty/>**

The next hearing in this series will be held on April 30, 2014 at 10:00 a.m. EST. The committee will hear testimony from Bishop Shirley Holloway, founder of House of Help City of Hope and Robert Woodson, president of the Center for Neighborhood Enterprise.

For complete information on the hearings and report, go to the House Committee on the Budget website at <http://budget.house.gov/>



Kindergarten Database Update

The Education Commission of the States has recently released an update of their on-line kindergarten database.

This database provides information for all 50 states and includes the following highlights:

- ⇒ Kindergarten entrance ages by state.
- ⇒ Kindergarten attendance requirements by state.

⇒ Compulsory school attendance age by state.

It includes state profiles with a "select by state" option and state reports that include other "highlights" such as whether children must attend kindergarten, whether states must offer kindergarten and information on curriculum alignment, kindergarten standards and teacher-student

ratios. The database may be found at http://www.ecs.org/html/educationissues/kindergarten/kdb_intro_sf.asp

You will also find an overview of the top educational issues highlighted in the 2014 State of the State addresses, including information on preschool proposals (primarily enhancing access) at <http://www.ecs.org/>

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"A Voice for Southern Children"

How to Use Public Policy Notes

If you're interested in advocacy, one of the most effective tools that you can have is access to information. This newsletter is provided as a service to locate and share information that we think will be helpful to you in your work at the state level and to keep you updated on what's happening in public policy.

You'll find information that:

- **Compares your state to other SECA states**—how you're doing, what issues you have in common, what the hot topics are in your states.
- **Brings the national scene to your fingertips** and gives you a perspective on how national events might impact you... You'll also receive information about where to find additional information.

We hope you'll find it helpful. Children need you to be their "voice" in your community and state.

This monthly newsletter is produced by Glenda Bean, SECA Executive Director.

SECA strives to provide non-partisan and non-biased information

that is of interest to early childhood educators. Sign up at

http://www.southernearlychildhood.org/policy_newsletter_sign.php

to receive notice of its availability each month.

From the SECA States

Arkansas

Mike Ross, the Democratic candidate for Governor in Arkansas proposed on April 2nd to phase in an expansion of the state's pre-kindergarten program if he's elected Governor this fall. The expansion would cost \$37 million more each year after it's fully implemented within 10 years. According to candidate Ross, "*The bottom line is this: No child in Arkansas should ever be on a waiting list for pre-K.*" He stated that he would give it equal priority with tax cuts and creat-



ing jobs.

Louisiana

Governor Bobby Jindal of Louisiana has proposed an alternative to the Affordable Care Act. The proposal, generated by Governor Jindal's America Next nonprofit, is the first in a series of policy ideas to be released. The plan would **eliminate the individual mandate that people carry health insurance.**

Source: Jindal Lays Out a New Health Plan, Wall Street Journal, 4/3/14

For a look at the nonprofit's mission statement, go to <http://americanxt.org/mission-statement/>



West Virginia

An update of the West Virginia KIDS COUNT report was released this month. **The report noted that more than 62% of child care workers in the state had no formal training.**

The 2013 Data Book features a pull-out "infographic" called "The Big Payoff: Why We Should Be (But Aren't) Investing the Most in WV's Youngest Kids."

For a copy of the report, go to www.wvkidscountfund.org/

