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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Impact of the Shutdown Continues for Thousands of Ohio Families

OHIO — With the federal government now reopened, many are breathing a sigh of relief. But for Ohio's Head Start programs—and the thousands of families who rely on them—the impact of the shutdown continues. Currently there are closures in Highland, Scioto and Coshocton Counties that impact 739 children and 207 staff. Across the state, eleven Head Start grantees serving more than 6,000 children will have exhausted their federal funds as of November 30th. Even as government operations resume, many programs are still waiting for timely payment from Washington.

To help address this uncertainty, the Ohio Head Start Association has reached out to Ohio's Congressional delegation to urge their assistance in stabilizing our programs. We are asking members of Congress to:

- Encourage the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the Administration for Children and Families to waive the standard congressional hold that delays the release of Head Start grant funds for an additional week; and
- Ensure all grantees receive written detailed confirmation of their award and payment date so that programs can plan responsibly and communicate transparently with families and staff.

"These are real families suffering. The shutdown has destabilized families and communities," said Julie Stone, Executive Director of the Ohio Head Start Association. "Parents have lost child care, teachers have lost paychecks, and children have temporarily lost access the stable, nurturing environments that help them thrive. These are real people with real consequences—and Ohio's youngest citizens deserve better."

Head Start is a lifeline for families – it provides early learning, nutrition, health screenings, and family support services to low-income children from birth to five. When programs close, families lose access not only to education and care but also to essential meals, health services, and stability.

The Ohio Head Start Association is calling on the Administration to provide Head Start grantees the reassurance of funding necessary to reopen classrooms and prevent further closures to keep children learning, families strong, and communities stable.

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