



Los Angeles Area
Chamber of Commerce

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**LA AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE ENDORSES
PRESCHOOL FOR ALL INITIATIVE**

Group deems preschool an extraordinary investment in the future

Los Angeles, CA – The Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce announced today that it will support a ballot measure aimed at providing preschool for all four-year olds in California, nearly a year before it is expected to go before voters.

The announcement of the region's most influential business organization is a sign of key support from the L.A. business community for the initiative. It is also a bold, unusual move for the LA Area Chamber, which has opposed similar measures and funding mechanisms in the past.

If passed, the **Preschool for All Act** will provide high-quality, free preschool to all four-year olds in California. The system will be voluntary and will build on the existing network of public, private and nonprofit preschool providers. The initiative is expected to qualify for the June 2006 ballot, with signature gathering to begin later this summer.

President and CEO of the Los Angeles Area Chamber Rusty Hammer said the initiative was an unprecedented investment that deserved the organization's support. "After several months of review, our board of directors concluded that the benefits of the universal preschool initiative will significantly improve the quality of our workforce, our education system and our quality of life. There is no one single fix in reforming our state's public education system, but we are certain that the Preschool for All Act is one of the most important fixes."

Children's advocate Rob Reiner said the Chamber's endorsement will be a key ingredient to the success of the initiative. "I am extremely pleased to have the LA Area Chamber on board with the Preschool for All Act. From the beginning of this effort, our coalition has included business leaders because we believe that preschool is not only a smart investment in our children, but also will be a boon to the economy."

A recent study by economists at the RAND Corporation found that California would receive \$2.62 back for every dollar invested in quality preschool for all 4-year-olds—savings generated by reduced remedial education spending, drop-out rates and crime. (To read the full study: <http://www.rand.org/publications/MG/MG349/index.html>)

Reiner added that new research continues to show the benefits of preschool. “Study after study shows that high-quality preschool helps prepare all kids for school. And the effects are long-lasting. Children who attend preschool are less likely to be held back in school and more likely to graduate and attend college. Preschool is the single best step we can take to improve our K-12 education system.”

In addition to the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce, the Preschool for All Act is supported by a diverse coalition of parents, education experts, law enforcement and business leaders, including current Los Angeles mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, former mayor and California Education Secretary Richard Riordan, and Los Angeles County Sheriff Lee Baca.

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The Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce, with more than 1,400 members, represents the interests of business in LA County. Founded in 1888, the Chamber promotes a prosperous economy and quality of life in the Los Angeles region. For more information visit www.lachamber.org.