



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 10, 2007

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State and Business Leaders Gather to Discuss How Early Childhood Investments can Improve American Economy

Summit Convenes in Colorado on Heels of Recent Study Showing that Government Investments in Children Forecast to Decline Over the Next Ten Years

Telluride, CO – More than 100 leading policy makers, business leaders and philanthropists will meet this week to begin building the framework to improve America's productivity and ability to compete by investing in the well-being of its young children. The Partnership for America's Economic Success and the Telluride Foundation are co-hosting the two-day Telluride Economic Summit on Early Childhood Investment to address the economic benefits of investing in children from before birth to age five. Colorado Governor Bill Ritter, Montana Governor Brian Schweitzer, and Kansas Governor Kathleen Sebelius will be participating in the conference, along with Denver Mayor John Hickenlooper.

"Business leaders understand that investing in early childhood development is a winning strategy for long-term economic strength in a global economy," said Robert Dugger, managing director of the Tudor Investment Corporation and Advisory Board chair of the Partnership for America's Economic Success. "The business community recognizes the importance of increasing America's productivity and wants to be a part of discussing how to increase investments in young children."

"The successful development of tomorrow's workforce is key to the economic future of Colorado and the nation and we are pleased to host many of America's leading business and policy leaders to set a course for the future," said Colorado Governor Bill Ritter. "Providing young children with the necessary tools to succeed, in school and beyond, will help to create a skilled and strengthened workforce."

Research shows that investing in children early in life is a critical step toward strengthening our nation's workforce and customer base. One study reported that investments in early education for disadvantaged children can produce a rate of return of about 16 percent a year. The Partnership for America's Economic Success is examining a range of investments in young children, including health care and supports for families of infants and toddlers, to further quantify the level of returns on those investments.

Despite this research, a recently released report from the Urban Institute and the New America Foundation found that if present policies continue, federal investments in children would decline steeply through 2017. Forecasts of federal government spending show that overall annual domestic spending will rise by \$650 billion, but investments in children's programs would garner nearly none of this increase. This downward trend could have a negative impact on the country's economic growth unless current policies are revised.

The conference attendees will address this budgetary issue, in addition to emerging research findings, the importance of private sector involvement, communication strategies to disseminate the message, the role of public policy in supporting children's investments, and global economic competitiveness.

"Given the increasingly global economy, it is more important now than ever that the United States set a long term strategy for economic competitiveness," said Montana Governor Brian Schweitzer. "It is not clear at this point that our nation's children are prepared to take on the challenges of the 21st century. If we invest in their development, however, then the U.S. can secure its position as a global leader."

"No one solution will get us where we need to go in terms of a strong and successful workforce. There needs to be a broad-based approach, encompassing everything from education to health care and beyond. Only by addressing the range of issues that affect children will we create the brighter future we all are seeking," said Kansas Governor Kathleen Sebelius.

Other conference attendees include J.R. Gonzalez of the National Hispanic Professionals Organization, Arthur Rolnick of the Minneapolis Federal Reserve Bank, and Barbara O'Brien, the Lieutenant Governor of Colorado.

"The Telluride Foundation is proud to host these business and policy leaders for an engaging and informative discussion," stated Paul Major, President and CEO of the Telluride Foundation. "This event will produce a crucial foundation to further the campaign for early childhood investment."

For a full conference agenda, and for a list of upcoming research reports that will be released by the Partnership for America's Economic Success, please visit: www.partnershipforsuccess.org.

The Telluride Foundation exists to create a stronger Telluride community through the promotion and support of philanthropy. It is a nonprofit, apolitical community foundation that provides year-round support for local organizations involved in arts, education, athletics, charitable causes, land conservation and other community-based efforts through technical assistance, education and grant making. For more information on the Telluride Foundation, visit www.telluridefoundation.org.

The Partnership for America's Economic Success was created by a group of business leaders, economists, advocates, and a dozen funders in order to document the economic impacts to the nation of proven investments in children from before birth and to age five. The Partnership is managed by The Pew Charitable Trusts. For more information, please visit www.partnershipforsuccess.org.

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