



Obama Plan to Expand Preschool Draws Skepticism from Conservatives

By: Dave Wade – February 15, 2013

President Barack Obama wants to expand preschool but it was met with skepticism from Republicans who fear that the creation of another federal entitlement program would add to the nation's deficit and increase the ranks of the teachers' unions. Last Thursday, President Obama visited a class of 4 year olds. he pledged to make high quality preschool available to all children, which could cost as much as \$10 billion per year or a tenth of the entire federal education budget.

Despite laying out the plans that White House officials said would use federal money in support of state-based preschool programs, conservatives said that they are suspicious that it would result to a bigger government. They added that there was little evidence that large-scale preschool programs have positive effects on children in the long run. Supporters of the proposal said that quality preschool education makes a significant difference in the lives of children. They are already preparing for a battle in Congress.

Andrew J. Coulson, director of the center for educational freedom at the Cato Institute, said that the president's preschool plan appeared to require highly paid preschool teachers and that President Obama wanted to expand his own political base.

Republicans on Capitol Hill said that they were waiting for more details before making a final judgment. Senior aides in the Republican-controlled House said that they were concern about the scope of the program, qualifications of the participants, and the program's quality controls.

President Obama gave several details of his plan to expand access to high quality early education. He cited preschools in Georgia as an example of the kind of long-term benefits for children taught at an early age by a qualified teacher.

White House officials declined to give out an estimate of how much President Obama's proposals would cost. They said that the details would be released with the president's budget in the next couple of weeks.