

## Ellison renews call to end sequester; says area's most vulnerable hardest hit

Written by Harry Colbert, Jr.  
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Parents in Community Action (PICA) Head Start Executive Director Alyce Dillon said her program's resources are stretched to the max.

If further federal cuts, known as sequester, are to occur, Dillon is forecasting a bleak future for those who could be dropped from Head Start, the federal preschool educational, health and nutritional program for disadvantaged children. The 43-year veteran of the program said Head Start in Hennepin County is already in a dire predicament.

"Keep in mind, even prior to the sequester, we had 1,000 parents who were trying to get their children into the program (but could not access the program due to a lack of funding)," said Dillon. "Why this country should balance the budget on the backs of the poor and vulnerable children is beyond me. It's shocking and appalling."

With Fraser Head Start as the setting, 5th District Democratic Rep. Keith Ellison called on his fellow members of Congress to end federal cuts that he said are impacting the most vulnerable such as small children and the elderly. Ellison toured the Fraser Head Start program, 700 Humboldt Ave. N., to highlight how federal budget cuts are hurting Head Start programs all over the country and other services for the poor. According to the Congressman, Dillon and Head Start Director Rico Alexander, as many as 90 Hennepin County pre-kindergarten children will be kicked out of the program and 14 to 15 staff will be let go without an end to the sequester.

Ellison, co-chair of the Progressive Caucus, said he too is appalled at the inaction of the Republican-controlled Congress to end the sequester.

