



News from: **Office of Councilmember Loren Taylor**

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***COUNCILMEMBER LOREN TAYLOR EXPRESSES HIS FULL SUPPORT OF KEEPING OAKLAND'S HEAD START CENTERS OPEN***

**Oakland** – Since the beginning of his term in 2018, Councilmember Taylor has advocated for a strengthened and expanded Head Start Program. As the child of an OUSD teacher, broadening access to quality childhood education and programs, like those that helped shape him during his upbringing in Oakland, have been a focal point of his office. Therefore, amid discussion to close multiple Head Start Centers, two of which are in East Oakland, Councilmember Taylor is not only fully supportive of keeping them open but will also work to optimize the program's impact.

“The Head Start Program is a pillar of our community, as it remains one of the few affordable childcare options for our residents” said Councilmember Taylor, “I am so thankful and appreciative of the Head Start Program staff, teachers, parent volunteers, and volunteer board members, who have worked diligently to provide our children with access to early childhood education.”

Conducted only two months into Councilmember Taylor's term in office, a federal audit did indicate some shortcomings of the program. Following the release of the report, Councilmember Taylor pushed for and secured a more transparent and regular reporting of the Head Start Program, which undoubtedly aided the City's avoidance of an immediate closure. Over the past two years, city administration and Council have worked together to create a plan for addressing the gaps. There has been progress in the areas where Head Start received an unsatisfactory mark on identified deficiencies, however, there admittedly remains opportunities for this program to grow.

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While Councilmember Taylor does not Chair the Head Start Working Group, and receives information about the program via committee meetings and memos presented to full Council, he is continuing to utilize his role as Chair of the Life Enrichment Committee to help push forward and develop policy that expands preschool/early childhood education. In addition to City support, he is currently looking at county, federal, and other public funding sources to make a deeper investment into this critical program.

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Loren Taylor proudly serves as the District 6 representative on Oakland's City Council. As a third generation Oaklander, and nationally recognized business leader, Loren takes a practical and data-driven approach to solving the city's complex issues. As Councilmember, his work to provide community resources and spur economic development in Oakland, includes eliminating race and gender-based contracting disparities through the passage of his Local Business Empowerment Through Contracting legislation; establishing Liberation Park with the Black Cultural Zone – a location dedicated to the celebration of black businesses and community; stewarding local entrepreneurs through the ESO Ventures Program; securing funding for green spaces and beautification projects; and working with diverse property developers to ensure that development does not equate to the displacement of BIPOC residents. His decades of experience providing tailored solutions to cities, corporations enable him to make measurable progress tackling the most difficult social challenges.

