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SCHAKOWSKY, COLLEAGUES, NCJW RALLY FOR AFFORDABLE CHILD CARE

WASHINGTON, D.C. - At a Capitol Hill rally attended by more than 600 Jewish women activists and organized by the National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW), U.S. Representatives Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) today repeated her commitment to quality and affordable child care.

The "All Kids Count: Quality Child Care Now" rally was organized by NCJW as a part of the group's Washington Institute 2001 conference. In addition to rallying on Capitol Hill for quality child care, the conference participants are also in Washington to fight for women's reproductive freedoms and to oppose the Bush Administration's faith-based initiative.

"Child care in this country is at a critical state. So why is Congress and this president intent on ramming through a tax cut to the wealthy instead of helping families afford quality child care?" Schakowsky asked.

Schakowsky added that quality child care is out of the reach of many working families across the nation, including Illinois. "In too many places, parents are paying twice as much for child care as they would spend for public college tuition. In Illinois, the average cost of public college tuition is \$3525, while the average annual cost for child care for a 4-year-old in Illinois is \$4921."

"It is an honor to be a member of the National Council of Jewish Women. Together, we will continue to pursue public policies to help children and families nationwide," Schakowsky concluded.

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Last year, NCJW released a report entitled "Opening a New Window on Child Care." The report found major hurdles facing families of all income levels who are seeking child care services for their children. First, access to quality, affordable child care is shrinking. Second, the quality of care is often substandard. Third, the cost of child care, even poor quality care, is exceedingly high. Finally, our nation's economy is negatively impacted when women are forced to leave the workforce because they cannot afford or find quality child care.

Other members of Congress, including Representatives Rosa DeLauro (D-CT) and Connie Morella (R-MD) and Senator Paul Wellstone (D-MN) spoke at the event. Sally Cohen, director of the Yale University School of Nursing Center for Health Policy and Ethics at the rally and a leading child care advocate also addressed the rally. Other featured speakers included Arlington, Virginia Chief of Police Edward Flynn, who sits on the board of directors of the national bi-partisan anti-crime organization, Fight Crime: Invest in Kids.