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The Honourable Ms Miriam Lau, GBS, JP
Chairman of the House Committee
Legislative Council
8 Jackson Road
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Proposed Priority in the Scrutiny of Bills by Members

I am writing to propose that priority be accorded by Members to the scrutiny of two Bills, in the following order –

1. Revenue (Allowances for Tax) Bill 2005; and
2. Child Care Services (Amendment) Bill;

should the House Committee decide to set up Bills Committees to examine the Bills.

Revenue (Allowances for Tax) Bill 2005

The Bill was introduced into the Legislative Council on 27 April 2005. It seeks to amend the Inland Revenue Ordinance (Cap. 112) to implement the 2005-06 Budget proposals to increase the child allowance and to introduce a new basic allowance and a new additional allowance for taxpayers maintaining parents/grandparents aged between 55 and 59. These proposed measures would become effective as from the 2005-06 year of assessment upon enactment of the Bill. The uncertainty of the status of the allowances in question before enactment of the Bill would affect the assessment work of the Inland Revenue Department, which normally starts in June each year, and may start even earlier in relation to

taxpayers leaving Hong Kong. To facilitate the assessment work and to minimize possible inconvenience to taxpayers due to subsequent revision to the assessment, it is important that the Bill be enacted early.

Hence, we suggest that first priority be allocated to the Bill, so that the Bills Committee may commence scrutiny of the Bill as soon as possible.

Child Care Services (Amendment) Bill 2005

The Bill was introduced into the Legislative Council on 27 April 2005. It seeks to harmonize the services provided to pre-primary school children by child care centres, nurseries and kindergartens. The Bill needs priority treatment, as the Administration is committed to putting in place these harmonization measures by September 2005 to tie in with the commencement of the next school year. The Administration has briefed Members of the Education Panel and Welfare Services Panel and other stakeholders on the proposed implementation timetable.

I should be most grateful if you would put forward our proposals for Members' consideration at the coming House Committee meeting on 29 April 2005.

(Ms CHANG King-yiu)
Director of Administration