

Castle Amendment to Recruit more Highly Qualified Teachers in Low-Income Communities, Close Achievement Gap Overwhelmingly Approved -- March 29, 2006

Provision would formally establish Teach for America

Washington, D.C -- Delaware Congressman Mike Castle, Chairman of the House Education Reform Subcommittee today unanimously amended H.R. 609, the College Access and Opportunity Act, to authorize funding to recruit, select, train and support a national corps of outstanding recent college graduates, of all academic majors, who commit to teach in low-income communities and become lifelong leaders for education. Teach for America is an example of a national teacher corps, which Castle has worked to authorize since he introduced bipartisan authorization legislation in July 2005.

"The College Access and Opportunity Act represents another major accomplishment for education reform in this country, and I believe that this amendment would make a valuable addition. Support extends beyond Congress -- earlier this week, I spent time with Secretary Spellings who mentioned the importance of encouraging creative avenues to the classroom, and specifically referenced Teach for America. The First Lady has also taught in a Teach for America classroom.

"What we know to be true is that a highly qualified teacher is imperative to the achievement of our students. This amendment will help us to make that more possible across the country. A study by Mathematical Policy Research showed that corps members affected greater gains than would typically be expected in a year, especially in math. This year, 19,000 individuals applied to Teach For America, including 10 percent of the senior classes of Yale, Dartmouth, and Spelman, and 7 percent of the senior class of Cal-Tech. A majority of these students then stay on in the classroom. What a remarkable complement to the traditional avenue to teaching."

Castle's amendment would:

- Grow the number of highly accomplished recent college graduates teaching in underserved urban and rural communities in the United States
- Increase the number of school districts and communities served by a nationally recruited corps
- Build a broader pipeline of talented and experienced future leaders in public education and education reform.

Today, approximately 3,500 Teach For America corps members are teaching in 22 urban and rural areas across the country, collectively reaching around 300,000 students. By 2010, Teach For America aims to grow to its optimum scale of 8,000 corps members teaching across 35 high-need communities. With 4,000 entering corps members each year, the organization will be the nation's top employer of recent college graduates. Teach For America will bring in 1000 math or science teachers each year to the highest need areas in the country.

To learn more about Teach for America, please visit: <http://www.teachforamerica.org/>.

