

Castle Co-Authors Bill to Correct Management of the Reading First Program -- April 20, 2007

Washington D.C. -- Delaware Congressman Mike Castle, Ranking Member of the House Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education was a leader in the introduction of the Reading First Improvement Act yesterday, legislation which he co-authored and which works to organize and implement key recommendations made by the Department of Education's Inspector General as part of a recently completed investigation examining the management of the Department's successful Reading First Program.

Although recent Department of Education Data reinforced that Reading First students' reading proficiency is greatly improved by this critical program, reports by the Department's Inspector General revealed past flaws in the program's management out of Washington. This legislation aims to fix these management issues and ensure the program is functioning at the highest level for each student. The Reading First program provides grants to states to help schools improve children's reading achievement through scientifically-based reading instruction from Kindergarten through Third Grade.

"The ability to read is one of the most valuable tools any student can have throughout their education," said Castle. "For that reason, we need to make sure we are doing everything possible to ensure that reading instruction in our schools is functioning at the highest level possible. I am happy to co-sponsor the Reading First Improvement Act with Congressman McKeon so that the right provisions are put in place to enhance this very important program and help it continue to provide effective reading education in the United States."

According to the U.S. Department of Education, the Reading First Program is the largest federal reading initiative ever undertaken in the United States. As of the 2005/2006 school year, more than 5,600 students in 1,600 districts nationwide have participated in Reading First, serving approximately 1.8 million students.

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