

Castle Co-Sponsors Legislation Increasing Flexibility for School Programs -- June 6, 2007

Washington, D.C. --

Delaware Congressman Mike Castle, Ranking Member of the Subcommittee for Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education, along with seven other House Republican Members co-sponsored Rep Howard McKeon's (R-CA) State and Local Flexibility Improvement Act today. Rep Castle has been a long-time supporter of flexibility provisions under No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and the underlying Elementary and Secondary Education Act and hopes this legislation will allow districts and states to adapt their programs to the needs of the students in order to improve the quality of their education.

"I believe that this legislation is vital in strengthening the education of children across the nation. I recently discussed No Child Left Behind with Delaware teachers and parents, and flexibility was a topic of great concern among many of them. It is my hope that school districts and states will be able to use federal dollars to incorporate education programs that will serve the needs of their students. Each state, district, and student has different needs, and I hope this legislation will give everyone the tools needed to ensure that our nation's students succeed," Castle said.

Specifically, the State and Local Flexibility Improvement Act will:

- Give states and local school districts the freedom to target federal resources where they're needed most - from higher teacher salaries to technology in the classroom.
- Allow states to waive certain statutory or regulatory requirements under law, consolidate federal education programs, and use an alternative method for making allocations to local school districts instead of the current formula if their new proposal targets more funds effectively to those areas with high concentrations of low-income families.
- Measure individual student growth to determine whether schools and school districts meet Adequate Yearly Progress, including through well-designed growth models.
- Expand the poverty threshold for school wide programs, which frees local schools to consolidate all federal funds to improve the quality of the entire school.

Additionally, on Thursday, Rep Castle's subcommittee will further examine flexibility provisions under NCLB at a hearing on "Reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act: Current and Prospective Flexibility Under No Child Left Behind." This hearing is open to the public and will be held at 2:30PM in room 2175 at the Rayburn House Office Building.

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