

Castle Supports Labor-HHS-Education Spending Bill -- July 20, 2007

Washington, D.C. -- Delaware

Congressman Mike Castle yesterday supported the FY 2008 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations bill when it passed the House 276-140. This bill addresses programs that will aid Delaware families by providing access to better education, quality healthcare, safe jobs, and financial security during retirement.

The funding in the bill totals more than \$607 billion, with nearly \$152 billion for key social programs such as special education, community health centers, child care, and medical research. Among the critical programs increased under the bill, the maximum Pell Grant award would be boosted by \$390 to \$4,700 on top of a \$260 increase provided in 2007. This increase will benefit over 5.5 million low and medium-income students by making funds for a college-education more accessible. Additionally, the bill rejects the Administration's proposal to cut funding for Low-Income Home Energy Assistance (LIHEAP) and instead provides \$2.7 billion to support critical energy assistance for approximately 1 million more low-income seniors and families than last year.

Rep. Castle agrees these funds are needed to address the challenges the nation faces now and in the future, however he is not satisfied with the level of funding for National Institutes of Health (NIH). While the bill provides a \$750 million increase, much of those funds will be shifted to other agencies, including the Department of State and Health and Human Services.

"We slow the pace of progress at a time when the baby boom generation is aging, and the prevalence and cost of chronic diseases - such as cardiovascular diseases, cancer and age-related neurological diseases - will increase dramatically. The NIH fuels innovation, generates economic growth, and preserves our nation's role as the world leader in medical and health research. We cannot afford as a nation to restrain the progress of science and medicine," Castle said.

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