

Statement on Reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 -- September 2007

Good morning. Thank you Chairman Miller, for holding today's hearing and thank you all for joining us. I look forward to hearing from the witnesses who are with us today.

I think we can agree that one of the greatest challenges this nation faces is ensuring every child receives the academic tools they need to succeed in the future.

Five years ago, Congress enacted the No Child Left Behind Act to help meet this challenge and to address the achievement gap that exists between disadvantaged students and their more affluent peers.

The results are clear - NCLB is working, and this year Congress has the unique opportunity to work in a bipartisan way to create a bill which strengthens the law, while at the same time, maintains its core principles of accountability, flexibility, and parental choice.

For everyone here, NCLB is a priority, as I expect it is across the nation, and in my opinion, being able to have an effective dialog is imperative to the underlying reauthorization process.

Over the last several years the Committee has held many hearings here in Washington and around the country to examine a number of issues for the reauthorization of NCLB. Today we have the privilege to hear directly from those who share Congress's commitment to what NCLB stands for.

Since the draft's release I, along with Chairmen Miller and Kildee, and Senior Republican McKeon have received very useful feedback. As Mr. McKeon stated, this bill is far from complete and the reauthorization process is far from over, however, this discussion draft represents a good starting place for the reauthorization of this important piece of legislation, and this hearing allows us to discuss the feedback we have heard.

I believe that by hearing from you today and throughout the rest of this process, we can produce a bill that builds on NCLB's strengths, improves some of its limitations, and continues to produce more results for students, parents, and teachers.

Once again Mr. Miller,
thank you for holding this hearing and for facilitating a bipartisan
process to improve NCLB. I yield back the balance of my time.