

Castle: Achievement Gap Is Lessening in Delaware and Across the Nation -- September 26, 2007

Washington, DC

- Today, Delaware Congressman Mike Castle commented on the yesterday's National Assessment Governing Board's release of two reports on math and reading achievement of 4th and 8th grade students as assessed by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), known as "the Nation's Report Card."

"The results are promising," Castle said. "Our Nation's Report Card shows that national student achievement is on the rise, achievement gaps are narrowing, and more students are at, or above, basic and proficient levels in reading and mathematics.

"While 13 other schools are statistically equal to Delaware's performance on NAEP, Delaware Public Schools continue to lead in average score gains since the Delaware Student Testing Program was implemented in 1998. As pointed out by the Delaware Department of Education, this year Delaware ranks first for all students in 4th grade math gains, first for all students in fourth grade reading gains, fifth for all students in 8th grade math gains, and first for all students in 8th grade reading gains.

"Delaware has also seen the achievement gap between African American students and white students narrow in 4th and 8th grade reading as well as 4th grade math. Additionally, 4th and 8th grade math scores for females, African Americans, Hispanic, and low-income students increased significantly. Overall, Delaware's NAEP results were higher than the national public school average.

"The results of the 2007 Nation's Report Card are good and illustrate the hard work our nation's students, parents, teachers, and schools have done, and continue to do on a daily basis. The results also demonstrate that No Child Left Behind is working and reinforces the need to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act this year, to strengthen the law, while maintaining the core principles of No Child Left Behind: accountability, flexibility, and parental choice which has helped Delaware as well as other states to make such gains in education," Castle said.

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), more frequently referred to as No Child Left Behind (NCLB), is a critical piece of education legislation aimed at closing the achievement gap between disadvantaged students and their more affluent peers. No Child Left Behind passed the U.S. House of Representatives with bipartisan support in 2001, and as Congress works to reauthorize the legislation during this Congress, Members from both parties continue working together. Recently, Rep. Castle along with other Members of the House Education and Labor Committee, including Chairman George Miller (D-CA), Subcommittee Chairman Dale Kildee (D-MI), and Senior Republican Howard McKeon (R-CA) posted a discussion draft of ESEA.

As Congress continues to move forward with the reauthorization of NCLB, and in anticipation of introducing legislation, Rep. Castle would like to hear from his constituents about the discussion draft of ESEA, as well as what elements of current law parents and educators feel is working and what can be improved. To incorporate Delawareans into the NCLB reauthorization process, Rep. Castle will be holding a public meeting on Saturday, September 29th at Delaware Technical & Community College in Wilmington in Conference Room B on Shipley Street from 9:15 - 10:45AM to discuss this legislation and hear feedback on this bill. Please contact Rep. Castle's office for more information on the town hall meeting.

To access more information on our Nation's Report Card, go to <http://www.nationsreportcard.com>.
To view the current discussion draft of NCLB, go to <http://republicans.edlabor.house.gov>.

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