

## CASTLE WELCOMES UNIFORM GRADUATION RATE -- APRIL 1, 2008

Washington, DC -- Rep. Michael N. Castle (R-DE), a senior Member on the House Education and Labor Committee, today welcomed news that the U.S. Department of Education is taking steps to ensure a uniform standard for calculating the number of students who graduate from U.S. high schools on time. U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings announced she will take administrative steps to ensure all states use the same formula to calculate how many students graduate from high school on time, and how many drop out. Secretary Spellings referenced the National Governors Association's (NGA) recommended graduation rate as a model for the Department's proposal, which includes

- Implementing a standard four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate;
- Improve state data collection, reporting and analysis, and link data systems across the entire education pipeline from preschool through postsecondary education;
- Implement additional indicators that provide richer information and understanding about outcomes for students and how well the system is serving them; and
- Reporting annual progress on the improvement of their state high school graduation, completion and dropout rate data.

Currently, under No Child Left Behind (NCLB) each state may define the standard number of years required for graduation, which in effect allows each state to set their graduation rate. In Delaware, the graduation rate is calculated by dividing its number of graduates in a given year by that number plus the number of students who dropped out during the past four years.

The Secretary's proposal is aligned with legislation introduced this Congress by Rep. Castle, The Reliable and Accurate Graduation Rate Act to define a national graduation rate, in order to streamline data collection and create an indicator that is comparable throughout the United States.

"A hallmark of the No Child Left Behind Act is to provide meaningful information to parents and communities about the quality of their children's schools. Yet for too long, a key indicator of student success -- graduation from high school -- has been masked by misleading data and contradictory calculations," said Rep. Castle. The Secretary's proposal, along with the Reliable and Accurate Graduation Rate Act, builds upon the work that is already being done in several states, including Delaware, to define a reliable and comparable graduation rate

"At a time when students need higher levels of education to succeed in an increasingly competitive global economy, the number of students leaving high school without a diploma is alarming. Although much work remains, establishment of a consistent graduation rate is a critical first step toward solving the graduation crisis and ensuring our students are given the tools they need to succeed."

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