

# The Education Report

*A weekly report of public policy issues in American Education from*

*Washington Partners, LLC*

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**October 4, 2002**

## **Still No Action on Labor-HHS-Ed-Appropriations**

Prospects for action on FY 2003 Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations before recess for the 2002 Congressional elections remain poor. The Senate Appropriations Committee approved its bill, S. 2766, on July 18th, but the bill has yet to appear on the Senate floor. The House has not passed or even marked up a Labor-HHS-ED bill in subcommittee because of disputes between conservative and moderate Republicans regarding how much to spend on education, with conservatives supporting the President's budget and moderates seeking increases.

On Thursday, the House and Senate considered and passed H.J. Res. 112, a second continuing resolution (CR) providing FY02 funding-levels for federal departments and agencies for which no FY03 appropriations have been made through Friday, October 11<sup>th</sup>. However, what will happen after next Friday remains unclear. An additional short-term CR is expected.

House speaker Dennis Hastert has indicated that he would like to complete homeland security legislation this year, but recognized that the end of the session would be determined by the outcome of the November elections and the ability of the Senate to move legislation. He stated that the House could reconvene for one day each week to pass a series of additional seven-day CRs. When asked about this possibility, House Minority Leader Richard Gephardt (D-MO) accused Republicans of ignoring the economy and challenged GOP leaders to schedule debates on unemployment insurance, prescription drugs and education funding.

Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle (D-SD) is threatening to keep the Senate in session until the November 5<sup>th</sup> elections and then reconvene immediately following the elections to work on any unfinished business.

Republican leaders in both the House and the Senate have indicated that they would support a long-term CR either before or after the November elections that would last until February or March. However, appropriators generally are against this idea because they believe it would damage agencies and cause logistical problems next year. Daschle has said that a continuing resolution that would keep the government operating well into the current fiscal year should provide funding at an annual rate of \$768 billion. However, the Republicans and the White House have set a \$759 billion limit.

### **House Approves CLASS ACT**

On Tuesday, the House approved HR 5091, the “Canceling Loans to Allow School Systems to Attract Classroom Teachers Act” unanimously by consent. The bill, penned by Lindsey Graham (R-SC), aims to increase the number of qualified teachers in our nation’s schools by significantly increasing the total amount of federal student loan forgiveness for teachers from \$5,000 to \$17,500. The bill prioritizes teachers of special education, mathematics and science, and those who work in disadvantaged schools for forgiveness, as well as the spouses of fire, police, military and rescue personnel who were victims of the September 11 attacks. The Senate has not yet acted on a companion bill. With the end of the session approaching, it is unlikely that time will permit enactment of this bill into law.

### **Representative Patsy Mink Succumbs to Viral Pneumonia**

Representative Patsy Mink (D-Hawaii) passed away September 28<sup>th</sup> in the intensive care unit of Hawaii’s Straub Clinic and Hospital, where she had been battling viral pneumonia since being admitted August 30<sup>th</sup>. She was 74.

With her election to the House of Representatives in 1964, Mrs. Mink became the first Asian American woman elected to Congress. She was a strong advocate of education, civil rights, and the environment over the course of her 24-year tenure, which spanned much of the 1960’s and 1970’s, and then began once again in 1990 by winning a special election. Mrs. Mink was staunchly opposed to the Vietnam War; she was one of the first to call for President Nixon’s resignation; and she played an integral role in the 1972 drafting and passage of Title IX, which requires gender equity for any education program receiving federal dollars. Title IX was revolutionary in opening the doors for women to organized athletics at high schools, colleges, and universities all across the country.

Mrs. Mink was the ranking Democrat on the Education and Workforce Subcommittee on 21<sup>st</sup> Century Competitiveness. Chairman John Boehner of the House Education and the Workforce Committee issued a statement that described Mrs. Mink as “a vibrant, passionate, and effective voice for the principles she believed in. Her passing is a significant loss for our committee, the people of Hawaii, and the people of the United States.”

Mrs. Mink was up for re-election in November; her name will remain on the ballot, and if she defeats Republican Rep. Bob McDermott, a special election would be held.

### **National Council on Disability Nominees Confirmed by Senate**

On September 26, the Senate confirmed six of President Bush's nominees to the National Council on Disability (NCD). NCD is an independent federal agency of 15 members with the mission of promoting policies that guarantee equal opportunity and promote empowerment of individuals with disabilities. The new appointees are:

Glenn B. Anderson Ph.D.  
Little Rock, Arkansas  
Director of Training  
University of Arkansas Rehabilitation and Training Center for Persons who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

Milton Aponte  
Cooper City, Florida  
Attorney, US Department of Justice  
Immigration and Naturalization Service

Barbara Gillcrist  
Santa Fe New Mexico  
Former high school teacher

Graham Hill  
Arlington, Virginia  
Counsel, US House of Representatives Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

Marco Rodriguez  
Elk Grove, California  
Branch Owner, Principal Financial Group

David Wenzel  
Scranton, Pennsylvania  
Member, Board of Pennsylvania Vocational Rehabilitation

### **Senate Commerce Committee Holds Hearing on Title IX and the Sciences**

The Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Subcommittee on Science, Technology and Space held a hearing Thursday entitled "Title IX and the Sciences." The purpose of the hearing was to highlight ways to more strongly enforce Title IX in respect to the mathematics, science, and engineering fields.

In his opening remarks, the Subcommittee Chairman Senator Ron Wyden (D-OR) noted that the nation's leaders, Congress in particular, cannot "legislate away" deeply entrenched notions that hold women to a second-class status in the realm of math and science. Rather, he said, they can set precedent by fully enforcing Title IX.

Mr. C Todd Jones of the Office of Civil Rights at the Department of Education testified that the doors of opportunity have opened to women since Title IX, and society and education have changed for the better because of it.

Ms. Marcia Greenberger of the National Women's Law Center quickly pointed out to Mr. Jones that it is the job of OCR to ensure that Title IX compliance is occurring by enforcing its provisions; it is not the job of OCR to base compliance mandates on statistics that show the increases in the numbers of women graduates in certain fields.

The testimony for this hearing is available at [http://commerce.senate.gov/hearings/hearings\\_0202.htm](http://commerce.senate.gov/hearings/hearings_0202.htm). If you would like more information about this hearing, please contact Mairin Brady at 202-289-3900, or by e-mail at [mbrady@wpllc.net](mailto:mbrady@wpllc.net).

### **NSF Grants Math and Science Partnership Awards**

The National Science Foundation (NSF) has awarded seven comprehensive awards, seventeen targeted partnership grants, and twelve smaller awards under the Math and Science Partnership program (MSP). These partnership projects are designed to improve student performance in math and the sciences, most often by addressing teacher training in the mathematic and scientific fields. The goal of MSP is to greatly improve the math and science achievement of all students, and these new awards will work to enhance the quality, quantity, and diversity of math and science teachers in order to reach that goal.

The seven comprehensive awards, totaling nearly \$147 million over five years, will affect an estimated 1.8 million students across 11 states. The seventeen targeted partnership grants totaled approximately \$90 million over five years, and are designed to improve achievement in specific grades, areas and disciplines. These grants should affect over 200 school districts in 11 states, and approximately 600,000 pre-k through grade 12 students. In addition, 12 smaller grants were awarded for building projects that will provide research, evaluation and technical assistance for the MSP Learning Network.

For more information, go to: <http://www.nsf.gov/home/ehr>

### **Rep. George Miller Seeking Suggestions to Improve IDEA**

On Monday, Rep. George Miller (D-CA), ranking member of the Committee on Education and the Workforce in the House of Representatives, sent a public invitation to interested parties to provide comments on IDEA. The comments will be used as the Committee considers the reauthorization of IDEA. To date over 100 comments have been received addressing such topics as stronger monitoring and enforcement, better identification processes, reduction of paperwork and accountability. One of the most

frequently received comments was related to increasing funding for IDEA. In the letter Mr. Miller noted that he supports a \$2.5 billion increase for Part B every year for the next six years.

Suggestions for reauthorization should be e-mailed to: [idea-dem@mail.house.gov](mailto:idea-dem@mail.house.gov)  
For more information, check the website at <http://edworkforce.house.gov/democrats/idea>

### **GAO Releases School Voucher Report**

The GAO late last week released a report called “School Vouchers: Characteristics of Privately Funded Programs.” The report examined 78 privately funded voucher programs and found that they tended to share a number of characteristics and faced similar challenges. The two significant challenges they face are: making the programs long-term endeavors and retaining students in the programs.

The report also noted that a thorough evaluation of privately funded voucher programs in Washington DC, New York, and Dayton has indicated that African American students using the vouchers to attend private schools demonstrated greater improvement in math and reading than those students in a comparison group.

The full report is available at [www.GAO.gov](http://www.GAO.gov).

### **Houston School District Wins \$500K for College Scholarships**

Education Secretary Rod Paige announced Wednesday that the Houston Independent School District was the first ever winner of the annual Broad Prize for Urban Education. The school district will receive \$500,000 in college scholarships for taking home the first prize. The four other finalists—Boston, Atlanta, Long Beach, CA, and Garden Grove, CA—were awarded \$125,000 each.

Eli Broad, chairman and former CEO of SunAmerica Inc, and founder of the Broad Foundation, established the Broad Prize. The prize is the largest of its kind in public education. It is awarded to urban school districts that show significant improvement in test scores that simultaneously succeed in narrowing existing achievement gaps between white and minority students and between high and low-income students.

### **AYPF Previews New John Merrow Film on Preschool**

The American Youth Policy Forum (AYPF) held a luncheon Monday to preview the film *The Promise of Preschool: Journalist John Merrow Weighs the Merits of Preschool Education for Lower, Middle and Upper Class Families*. Dr. Merrow is an award-winning journalist who directs the not-for-profit Learning Matters Incorporated out of New York City.

In *The Promise of Preschool*, Dr. Merrow examines the inequities of our nation’s pre-k system from a socio-economic perspective. He is critical of our nation’s vast patchwork

preschool system that offers a wide range of public and private, educationally excellent and educationally inadequate, expensive and subsidized preschools. Start continues to be debated, it has undoubtedly opened up doors to young children.

The film examines the situations and predicaments of numerous families, one of which moved back to Paris, France from New York City in order to send their son to a quality, free preschool. The film spends significant time documenting French preschools, their teaching methods, and the methods they use to teach their teachers as well. In the US, Dr. Merrow highlights programs in Chicago and Georgia that are considered successful, and might act as models for the rest of the nation. In 1996, Georgia was the first state to enact universal, free preschool, and since that time, 70% of Georgia's 4-year-olds take advantage of the free preschool programs. However, inequities in quality among schools still exist. The film asserts that until a system is developed that offers free, universal preschool of an equal quality, our society will never truly be one of equal opportunity.

Head Start advocates attending the briefing voiced concern about the negative tone of the film towards their program, stating that the film was misleading in light of more recent, promising statistics.

The film should debut on PBS sometime this month.

### **Education News Parents Can Use October Broadcast Announced**

The Department of Education is set to broadcast its *Education News Parents Can Use* Tuesday, October 15, 2002. The broadcast, titled "Protecting Your Child at Home and at School," will examine a number of child safety issues that are concerns to both parents and school officials. Experts, school officials and parents will discuss bona fide risks to kids both at school, in the home and out in the community.

Some specific topics that will be addressed are: protecting children from abduction; bullying; establishing a clear crisis plan to use in times of emergency; and identifying aspects of a safe learning environment.

The broadcast will be held at WETA-TV at the PBS Studios; the reception begins at 6:30 PM and the broadcast begins at 8:00 PM. RSVP to 703-276-2772, ext. 24.