

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE
October 3, 2007

REAUTHORIZATION CONTINUES

1. The mark up for the House draft of Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, commonly called NCLB, has been moved back to October. Although this is a month later than Chairman Miller projected, staff members are expecting the bill to move forward. On the Senate side, Senator Kennedy, Chairman of the Senate Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee may release his NCLB draft next week.

2. One of the more interesting events in reauthorization is taking place in California. Chairman Miller - D and Minority Leader McKeon - R, Education and Labor Committee, and House Speaker Pelosi - D are supporting the House draft and are not winning points in their home state of California where they were elected. They are among 50 representatives from CA.

While Miller, McKeon, and Pelosi are promoting this draft, both chambers of the California Legislature jointly passed a resolution not supporting the draft including common complaints that have accompanied NCLB for the past five years: not enough flexibility, not enough money, and too much emphasis on test scores.

To add to the California Legislature's displeasure with the draft, the California Teachers Association (CTA) has announced a statewide effort to defeat the reauthorization draft being proposed by their legislators because their legislators' proposal makes the law worse than it is now

3. A complaint against the current draft proposal that is becoming more apparent across various groups is the increase in paperwork. Think about it, in addition to the prescriptive nature of the current accountability system that is being implemented and approved in great detail by United States Department of Education (USDE) staff, states will now have to deal with the USDE staff on the N count, growth models, multiple measures of assessment and differentiating levels of AYP with disaggregated data and school improvement provisions. Each of these areas will have to go to USDE for review for State approval. It is difficult to understand how states are getting

more flexibility when states must submit more and more to USDE for approval.

4. The House Republican Leader, John Boehner, R – Ohio asked the heads of the Education and Labor Committee for increased flexibility for states in expending funding while not weakening the accountability system. Local control is a major issue with many Republicans and currently 63 Republicans have cosponsored a bill that would permit school districts to create their own accountability system and still receive federal funds.

5. The NEA opposes the teacher pay proposals in Title II and has stated that it will not support any bill as long as it includes those proposals.

6. Jonathon Kozol, teacher and author, is in the midst of a fast against NCLB in an attempt to bring attention to “the vicious damage being done to inner city children” by NCLB. Mr. Kozol calls NCLB a “racially punitive piece of legislation.”

7. And we continue to wait to see if and when the funds will be forthcoming for the proposed NCLB. I am looking for more positive information. When I find it, I will share it.