

TALKING POINTS, K-12 SCIENCE AND MATH EDUCATION

- Although states play the lead role in funding education, the federal government must help lead the effort to improve K-12 mathematics and science education. We urge Congress and the administration to fulfill our nation's commitment to math and science in education in H.R. 1, the No Child Left Behind Act.
- During the next decade, the US demand for scientists and engineers is expected to increase at more than double the rate for all other occupations according to the National Science Foundation.
- The need for a scientifically literate population is essential for our economy and national security.
- Scores from the Third International Mathematics and Science Study show that American 12th graders are performing well below the international average in math and science.
- Recent National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) scores in math and science show that 82% of American 12th graders aren't proficient in science and 72% of 8th graders aren't proficient in math
- We applaud Congress for tackling this problem head-on by establishing the Math and Science Partnerships as part of HR 1, the No Child Left Behind Act. These partnerships provide an excellent framework in which to develop novel approaches to improving math and science education.
- The merit-based Math and Science partnership program fosters cooperation between school districts, university science and math departments, businesses, and educational organizations seeking to improve teacher quality and student achievement in math and science.
- Math and Science Partnerships are the only federal program focused exclusively on improving math and science education.
- H.R. 1 authorized \$450 million for the Partnerships. However, the appropriation for FY 2002 only contained \$12.5 million for this important program. President Bush has requested the same amount in FY 2003. This amounts to a 95% cut of dedicated funding for math and science at the Department of Education.
- Providing strong funding through the Department of Education is critical because this department is the only federal agency charged with improving teacher quality and learning across all states and school districts. However, the current funding level would leave most states and school districts without dedicated funding for math and science.