

News
From _____

CONGRESSMAN

Nick Rahall

WEST VIRGINIA-4th DISTRICT

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RAHALL SAYS HOUSE PASSED EDUCATION BILL TO HELP STATE

WASHINGTON, D.C. - U.S. Rep. Nick Rahall (D-W.Va.) says the educational funding bill passed by the House today will be a major step forward in providing educational opportunities in West Virginia.

During debate on the bill, Rahall called education the key to America's future and stressed that a greater commitment should be given in regards to educating young minds.

"The education of our youth must be a national priority," Rahall said. "All of the federal dollars to enhance defense, technology, medical training and many other areas are virtually useless without the basic education provided at the elementary and secondary levels. The federal, state and local levels of government and community must work together to provide a future of hope and promise for our children who will be tomorrow's leaders. I cast my vote for a promising tomorrow by supporting this bill."

Among its provisions, H.R. 5 authorizes new preschool and high school programs to encourage the expansion of compensatory services beyond the elementary level and provides \$100 million in Fiscal Year 1988 for high school dropout prevention programs. Rahall was an original cosponsor of the School Dropout Prevention Assistance Act which was the original vehicle for the dropout prevention provisions contained in H.R. 5.

"There are a number of dropout prevention programs which I have had the pleasure of working with to coordinate federal, school and community efforts," Rahall said. "In particular, the Cabell County Public Schools Dropout Prevention Program has been a model effort in the battle."

The School Improvement Act will now go to the Senate for consideration.

May 21, 1987

STATEMENT BY THE HONORABLE NICK J. RAHALL, II
ON H.R. 5, THE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT ACT

Mr. Speaker, it is with pleasure that I rise today in support of H.R. 5, the School Improvement Act. As the reauthorization measure for nearly all federal programs providing aid to elementary and secondary education -- including chapter 1 compensatory education and chapter 2 education block grant -- H.R. 5 is an extremely important bill to my fellow West Virginians and indeed to all Americans.

Under the chapter 1 compensatory education program, H.R. 5 authorizes additional funding for school districts with high concentrations of poor children, while continuing the present formula for distributing funds up to current appropriation levels. Funds for school districts -- up to the current appropriation level -- would continue to be allocated under the existing formula. However, the first \$400 million of additional appropriations above the FY87 appropriation level would be distributed according to a different formula that focuses funding on districts with high concentrations of poor children.

H.R. 5 authorizes new preschool and high school programs to encourage the expansion of compensatory education services beyond the elementary level. The "Even Start" program, authorized by the bill at \$50 million in FY88, combines basic adult literacy education for parents with preschool education for their children. The measure also authorizes \$100 million in FY88 for a program to prevent high school students from dropping out of school, and to develop basic skills among high school students.

As an original cosponsor of H.R.738, the School Dropout Prevention

Assistance Act, I am especially pleased with the incorporation of its provisions into H.R. 5. There are a number of dropout prevention programs in West Virginia which I have had the pleasure of working with to coordinate my efforts at the federal level to coincide with local school district and community efforts. In particular, the Cabell County Public Schools Dropout Prevention Program, under the direction of Dewey Parr of Huntington, West Virginia, has been a model effort in the dropout prevention battle. Dewey's first hand experience and diligent efforts have been of great assistance to me in directing my efforts at the federal level to promote dropout prevention effectively. I am pleased with H.R. 5's provisions in this regard and encouraged by the national recognition of the devastating effects of this problem on our entire society -- and most importantly on the students who give up, for whatever reason, the future that a high school diploma can provide.

H.R. 5 authorizes \$30 million in FY88 to help school districts purchase equipment, such as vans, buses, or mobile classrooms, so they can provide compensatory education services to children in private religious schools. This provision was necessitated by the 1985 Supreme Court decision which prohibits public school teachers from going into religious schools to provide compensatory education services.

The bill makes a number of changes designed to improve the chapter 1 program, reward successful programs, provide greater flexibility to school districts, and increase parental involvement.

~~Another provision~~ ^{Section} of the bill which is of great concern to West Virginia's education network is the treatment of the chapter 2 education

block grant. The bill authorizes \$580 million in FY88 and such sums as may be necessary in FY89 and through FY93 for the education block grant. This program, which was created in 1981, consolidated over 40 separately authorized programs into a single block grant to states. Funds are allocated to states on the basis of their school-age population, and the states are required to pass on at least 80% of their allocations to local school districts. States and school districts are permitted to use these funds for over 30 approved activities.

H.R. 5 continues the current formula for allocating chapter 2 funds among states and the requirement that states pass through 80% of their allotment to local school districts. Of the 20% of funds retained at the state level, the bill requires that one-quarter be used for "effective schools" programs, which use schools with high-performing students as models for others. The measure also provides that no more than one-quarter of the funds retained by the state can be used for administration of the block grant.

Under the bill, states would continue to allocate funds to local school districts in a way similar to current law. The bill does, however, clarify the provision of current law under which states adjust allocations to local school districts on the basis of the number of high-cost students -- defined as children from low-income families and children living in sparsely populated areas. The bill's provisions are designed to ensure that the higher per pupil allocations for such high-cost children actually get to the school such children attend. The measure also specifies that states should make such adjustments only for school districts with the largest numbers of

such high-cost children.

In place of the more than 30 kinds of activities for which current law permits chapter 2 funding, the bill substitutes five broader categories: programs for "at risk and high-cost children," such as the economically disadvantaged, potential dropouts, drug and alcohol abusers, and children with limited English proficiency; effective schools programs; instructional and educational materials improvement; personnel training; and, special projects (including gifted and talented, youth suicide, and technology education).

One important restriction on the program as a result of H.R. 5 would be the elimination of drug abuse education as one of the permitted uses of these funds. This elimination follows the inclusion of drug abuse prevention programs in the omnibus drug bill which became law last year making these discretionary funds in the chapter 2 program unnecessary. The bill does, however, authorize \$250 million in FY88 and such sums as may be necessary in succeeding years for drug education programs.

Other provisions of special interest to West Virginia are the provisions relating to adult literacy, mathematics and science education *and* gifted and talented education.

The measure authorizes \$200 million for adult education in FY88, and such sums as may be necessary for FY89 through FY93. This program aids states in providing programs to teach school and benefit from employment-related training. Adult education programs are implemented by local school districts, or by public or private agencies. (The FY87 appropriation for this program is \$106 million.)

The measure requires states to pay a larger share of the program's costs by raising the state matching requirement from its present level of 10%, to 13% in FY89, 17% in FY90, and 20% in FY91 and thereafter.

H.R. 5 authorizes \$400 million in FY88 and such sums as may be necessary for the next five fiscal years for the critical skills improvement program, commonly known as the "mathematics and science" education programs. This program, originally enacted in 1984, provides funds to states and local school districts and colleges and universities to improve the quality of teaching and instruction in mathematics, science, computer learning, and foreign languages. The program is currently authorized at \$350 million, but actual appropriations have been far below the authorized level. (The FY87 appropriation, for example, is \$80 million.)

In order to focus funds on mathematics and science, the bill eliminates foreign languages and computer learning from the list of activities that may be supported under this program.

The bill makes a number of changes in the allocation formula so that a larger share of the funds go to the local school district level. Under the bill, nearly 75% of the funds would go to school districts, 6% is reserved for territories, Indian programs, and other national activities, and the remainder will be distributed to states on the basis of a formula based 50% on enrollment and 50% on the chapter 1 poverty formula.

H.R. 5 authorizes \$25 million in FY88 and such sums as may be necessary in the next five years for grants to states, school districts, institutions of higher education, and other private and public agencies to support

programs that identify and meet the needs of gifted and talented students. As an original cosponsor of H.R. 543, the Jacob K. Javits Gifted and Talented Children and Youth Education Act, I am pleased with the^e provisions of H.R. 5 which incorporate the provisions of H.R. 543. During the 99th Congress, I sponsored as well as cosponsored legislation in this regard. I also had the opportunity to testify before the Subcommittee on Elementary, Secondary and Vocational Education on the need for federal funding in this regard. As an original cosponsor of H.R. 543, I continued my efforts during this Congress and find the provisions of H.R. 5 encouraging.

The education of our youth must be a national priority. All the federal dollars to enhance defense, technology, medical training, disease control, and even higher education, are useless without the basic education provided at the elementary and secondary level. Our children are the key to this Nation's future. Our children are the enlisted personnel and officers of tomorrow's Armed Forces. Our children are the computer operators and high tech developers of tomorrow. Our children are the health care givers and administrators of tomorrow. Our children are the scientists of tomorrow. Our children are tomorrow's educators, federal employees, diplomats, corporate executives, and Members of Congress. Today, we are voting on the future of this Nation. The federal dollars in this bill contribute to that future. The federal, state and local levels of government and community must work together to provide a future of hope and promise for our children. I will cast my vote for a promising tomorrow by supporting passage of this authorization bill.