

## PRESS RELEASE

U.S. Congressman

# Nick Rahall

*WORKING FOR WEST VIRGINIANS*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: STEPHEN SPINA ✓

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 1989

PHONE: (202) 225-3452

### RAHALL URGES SECRETARY OF EDUCATION TO STEP UP EFFORTS ON ADULT ILLITERACY

WASHINGTON, D.C.-- BECAUSE OF THE PRESSING PROBLEM OF ADULT ILLITERACY IN OUR COUNTRY TODAY, U.S. REP. NICK J. RAHALL, II (D-WV) ANNOUNCED TODAY THAT HE HAS JOINED WITH HIS FELLOW COLLEAGUES IN THE HOUSE AND SENATE IN URGING SECRETARY OF EDUCATION CAVAZOS TO COMPLETE THE STUDY ON COMBATTING ILLITERACY THAT IS NOW TWO YEARS OVERDUE.

DURING THE PAST 25 YEARS, THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT HAS SPENT BILLIONS OF DOLLARS TO IMPROVE THE LITERACY OF AMERICAN SCHOOL CHILDREN; HOWEVER, THE NUMBER OF FUNCTIONALLY ILLITERATE ADULTS INCREASES BY APPROXIMATELY TWO AND ONE QUARTER MILLION PERSONS EACH YEAR.

THE 99TH CONGRESS, IN AN EFFORT TO COMBAT THIS PROBLEM, PASSED A LAW THAT WOULD REQUIRE THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION TO COMPILE A COMPREHENSIVE REPORT ON PROGRAMS AND METHODS FOR TEACHING READING, INCLUDING PHONICS. THIS REPORT WAS DUE ON SEPTEMBER 20, 1987, AND HAS YET TO BE SUBMITTED TO CONGRESS.

THEREFORE RAHALL IS URGING SECRETARY CAVAZOS TO IMMEDIATELY FINISH THE REPORT AND SUBMIT IT TO CONGRESS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

"ADULT ILLITERACY IS A SERIOUS PROBLEM, AND UNTIL WE MORE FULLY UNDERSTAND THE SITUATION, WE ARE AT A LOSS TO FIND ANY SOLUTIONS. WE NEED TO GET MOVING," SAID RAHALL.

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*Sign for Secy Cavazos. FY*  
*Yes (See over)*



*Be good on this also. Kelly*

SUBCOMMITTEES:  
FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS  
HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
ECONOMIC STABILIZATION  
INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT  
FINANCE, TRADE AND MONETARY POLICY  
COMMITTEE ON MERCHANT MARINE AND FISHERIES  
SUBCOMMITTEES  
FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE  
CONSERVATION AND THE ENVIRONMENT  
OCEANOGRAPHY  
SELECT COMMITTEE ON AGING

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

**A LOGICAL STEP TO COMBAT ILLITERACY**

Dear Colleague:

One of the most pressing issues facing the nation today is the fact that over 20 million adults lack the basic reading, writing and math skills necessary to perform in today's increasingly complex job market. That means that about one in ten of your constituents are greatly restricted from many of the basic privileges of being an American citizen. We would like you to join us in asking Secretary Cavazos to conduct a study on beginning reading methods, including phonics.

During the past 25 years, the federal government has spent billions of dollars to improve the literacy of American school children. The cumulative expenditure for just one federal program, Compensatory Education (a program specifically targeted toward improving the reading ability of disadvantaged children from low income families) is more than \$60 billion. But, ironically, the number of functionally illiterate adults is increasing by approximately two and one quarter million persons each year.

The 99th Congress passed P.L. 99-425. Section 901 of that Act required the Secretary of Education to compile a comprehensive report on programs and methods for teaching reading, including phonics. That study was due on September 20, 1987, and has yet to be submitted to the Congress. Attached is a letter to Secretary Cavazos requesting that the report required by P.L. 99-425 be completed as soon as possible.

Of the various reading methods, it is unclear which are most effective in getting people to read and at which stage of the learning process these methods should be applied. We believe that the information provided by this study could play a critical role in giving school officials, teachers, and parents the tools needed to assess reading methods used today, and identify those that research has proven to be the most effective in improving literacy. The debate has gone on too long.

Please join us in urging Secretary Cavazos to give this important matter his immediate attention. Call Kris x52726 in the House or Judith x48729 in the Senate before October 6th if you wish to co-sign the attached letter.

Sincerely,

*Pat Saiki*  
Patricia Saiki  
Member of Congress

*Dan Coats*  
Dan Coats  
U.S. Senator



**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
Washington, DC 20515

Secretary Lauro F. Cavazos  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20202

Dear Secretary Cavazos:

On September 30, 1986, P.L. 99-425 was approved by the Congress. Section 901 of this law required that a study on reading methods be conducted and reported to the Congress before September 30, 1987. However, the Department of Education never fulfilled the mandate of this section of the law, which is more commonly referred to as the Zorinsky Amendment after its author, the late Senator Edward Zorinsky.

The law requires that the Secretary of Education "shall conduct a study in order to compile a complete list, by name, of beginning reading instruction programs and methods, including phonics, indicating; (1) the average cost per pupil of such programs and methods; and (2) whether such programs and methods do or do not present well designed instruction as recommended in the report of the Commission on Reading entitled "Becoming a Nation of Readers". The listing required by this section shall be written in such a way as to be understandable to the general public. In carrying out the study required by this section, the Secretary shall solicit public comments on beginning reading programs and methods."

The law also requires that "the Secretary shall prepare and submit to the Congress such interim reports of the study and listing as the Secretary deems advisable. The Secretary shall prepare and submit a final report containing the listing required by this subsection to the Congress not later than 12 months after the date of the enactment of this Act. The Secretary shall publicize and disseminate nationally the listing required by this section to the education community, parents, and to other interested persons."

We feel this information, once made available, would be a significant tool in the hands of educators and policy makers in improving literacy in the United States. Since the study was due on September 30, 1987, we respectfully request that it be conducted immediately, and presented to the Congress as soon as possible, but not later than October 1, 1990.

Sincerely,

MEMBERS OF CONGRESS



# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

October 20, 1989

Secretary Lauro F. Cavazos  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20202

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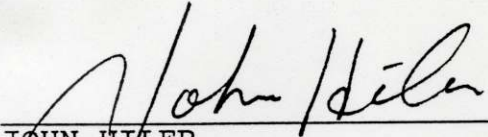
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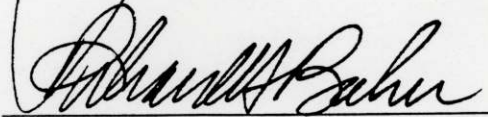



Patricia Saiki  
Member of Congress

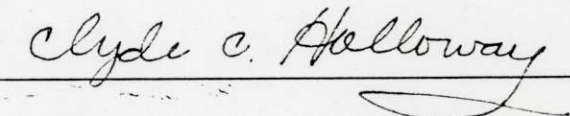
Dan Coats  
U.S. Senator

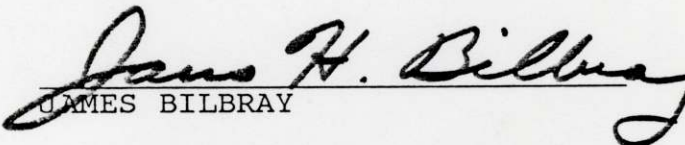


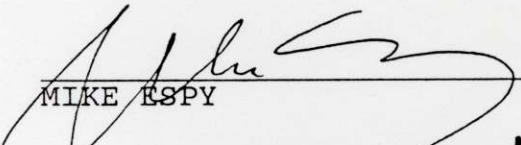
  
JOHN HILER


  
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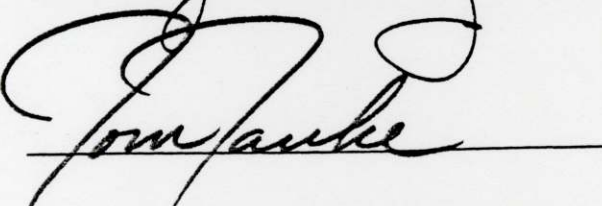
  
MIKE ESPY

  
JIM MCCRERY

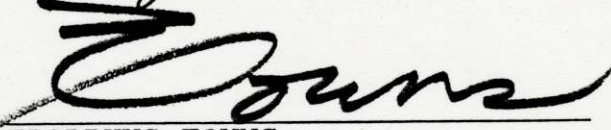
  
AUGUSTUS F. HANDBERG

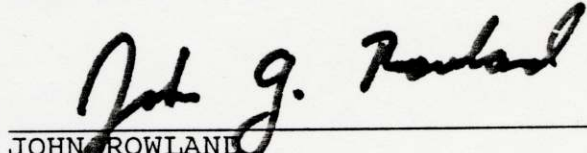
  
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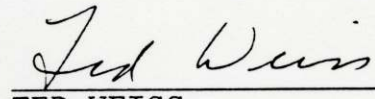
  
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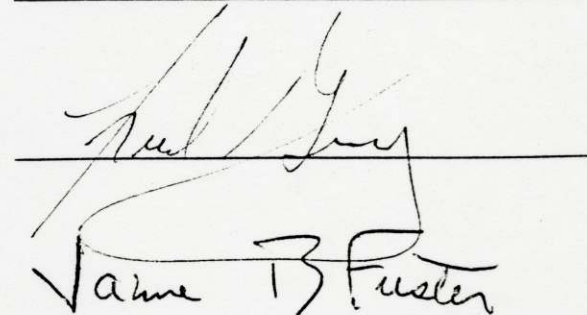
  
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PETER SMITH

  
VANCE B. FUSTER

  
NICK RAHALL