



E-NEWSLETTER

August 2008

McKeon Announces Back to School Energy Survey

All summer long, Republicans have been talking directly to the American people about the need for comprehensive energy reform strategies that will put America on the path to energy independence. As every American who commutes to work, drives their children, or pays utility bills knows, rising fuel costs are a serious problem, and one that isn't going away.

As children and families prepare to go back to school, we are reminded that our schools are heavily reliant on energy, and their budgets are heavily impacted when prices go up.

To help understand the scope of this problem, House Republicans have launched an [online survey](#) to



gather input from school officials, teachers, and families to determine the extent of the energy crisis in our schools.

It's a brief survey, but an important one. It will help lawmakers better understand how seriously schools are being impacted by current energy policies, and what steps are being taken because of high gas prices. All Americans are invited to complete the survey, but school leaders are especially encouraged to share their stories and provide their expertise to policymakers.

The survey can be found on the Education and Labor Committee Republican website by clicking [here](#). Please take a moment to answer the questions and pass the survey along to your colleagues, friends, and family.

After Five Long Years, Higher Education Reforms on Verge of Enactment

This newsletter is being distributed on August 1st, just one day after the House gave final approval to a higher education reform package that has been pending in Congress in various forms for the past five years.

The compromise legislation reflects key reforms first proposed by committee Republicans in 2003 and 2004, including steps to hold



down rising tuition costs, make higher education more consumer-friendly, and update programs to better reflect the needs of students in the 21st century.

The [conference report](#) and a [summary](#) of its key provisions can be found on the committee website. Click [here](#) to read remarks delivered during a meeting of House-Senate conferees as they finalized the legislation.

Democrats Pass (Another) Trial Lawyer Giveaway

As one of the last official orders of business before adjourning the House for the month of August, Democrats have approved a bill that would radically expand workplace liability and increase the number of lawsuits brought under workplace discrimination law.

Under the guise of protecting workers against sex-based wage discrimination, the so-called *Paycheck Fairness Act* would eliminate existing damage limitations. It would also make it far easier to bring discrimination claims

and far more difficult for employers to defend against such claims, opening them up to *unlimited* new penalties.

A broad coalition has formed in opposition to the bill, and the White House issued a Statement of Administration Policy before it was brought to the floor stating that if it was presented to the President, his senior advisors would recommend that it be vetoed.

According to the Statement of Administration Policy, "H.R. 1338 would make enforcement of these laws more difficult and error-prone and invite a surge of litigation."

Rank-and-File Union Members' Retirement Security at Risk?

Rep. McKeon expressed concern about the solvency of some unionized workers' pension plans last month after a report exposed serious funding shortfalls that could leave workers vulnerable in retirement. Even more troubling, McKeon noted, is that some pension plans serving rank-and-file union members appear to be significantly less well-funded than the plans established for those same unions' officials. [Read more...](#)

Over GOP Objections, Congress Adjourns Without Voting on Energy Reform

Republicans unanimously opposed a resolution to adjourn the House for the five-week August break, arguing that Congress should remain in session until it passes legislation to expand the production of American-made energy. Republicans fell just one vote short of keeping the House in session, and have vowed to return in September and continue fighting for their all-of-the-above energy reform plan.