

EDUCATION & LABOR COMMITTEE

Congressman George Miller, Chairman

Strengthening America's Middle Class

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Chairman Hinojosa Statement At Hearing On “Preparing Teachers for the Classroom: The Role of the Higher Education Act and No Child Left Behind”

WASHINGTON, D.C. – *Below are the prepared remarks of U.S. Rep. Rubén Hinojosa (D-TX), chairman of the House Subcommittee On Higher Education, Lifelong Learning, and Competitiveness, for a subcommittee hearing on “Preparing Teachers for the Classroom: The Role of the Higher Education Act and No Child Left Behind.”*

Good Morning. Welcome to the Subcommittee on Higher Education, Lifelong Learning and Competitiveness hearing on “Preparing Teachers for the Classroom: The Role of the Higher Education Act and No Child Left Behind.”

Reaching the goals of the No Child Let Behind Act will hinge on the quality of teaching in our classrooms. Unfortunately, too often, the number of poor and minority students in a school is also an indicator of the number of teachers who are not certified or who are teaching outside of their field of expertise in a school. The students who need the most experienced and skilled teachers are typically in schools that have the least experienced teachers. Our goal should be to change that.

Not only do we need to ensure that teachers are experts in the subjects that they are teaching. We also need to ensure that they are highly qualified to teach the students they have in their classrooms. The National Center for Education Statistics reported in its 1999-2000 Schools and Staffing Survey that 41.2 percent of teachers in the country had limited English proficient students in their classroom. Yet, only 12.5 percent of teachers had more than 8 hours of training in how to teach these students. Clearly, there is room for improvement.

Our federal programs in the Higher Education Act and the No Child Left Behind Act are aimed toward improving the quality of teaching through better preparation and professional development. They are also aimed at improving the distribution of these teachers so that concentrations of poverty or minority populations are no longer coupled with a concentration of under-prepared teachers. They also recognize that we need to do a better job of making sure that the teaching profession reflects the diversity of America's schools.

Title II of the Higher Education Act supports teacher quality by focusing on improving the quality of teacher preparation programs, rigor of teacher certification requirements and recruiting teachers to serve in high need districts and schools. It is funded at less than \$60 million. Title II of the No Child Left Behind Act is a formula grant to states to improve teacher quality and reduce class size. It is

funded at \$2.9 billion - -significant federal investment. While similar in goals, it is not clear how complementary these two programs are.

This Congress, we will reauthorize both the Higher Education Act and the No Child Left Behind Act. This presents a unique opportunity to improve these laws so that they operate in a more integrated fashion and move us closer to our goal of a highly qualified teacher in every classroom.

I would like to thank our excellent panel of witnesses for joining us today. I am looking forward to your testimony on how the programs are currently working and on what steps we can take to better coordinate them.

I would like to yield to my good friend and ranking Member, Mr. Ric Keller of Florida, for his opening statement.

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