

## **EDUCATION & LABOR COMMITTEE**

**Congressman George Miller, Chairman**

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*Strengthening America's Middle Class*

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### **Chairman Miller Statement On Options For Improving No Child Left Behind's Measures Of Progress**

WASHINGTON, D.C. – *Below are the prepared remarks of U.S. Rep. George Miller (D-CA), chairman of the House Education and Labor Committee, for a committee hearing on: "Elementary and Secondary Education Act Reauthorization: Options for Improving No Child Left Behind's Measures of Progress."*

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Good morning. Today's hearing will shed light on one of the most important decisions we face in reviewing the No Child Left Behind law: whether or not to reform the current definition of Adequate Yearly Progress. I can think of no question more central to the reauthorization and goals of the law.

As one of the original authors of No Child Left Behind, I am often asked how I would like to see the law changed. The short answer is that I would like to see us be responsive to legitimate concerns while maintaining the core values of the law – providing equal opportunity and an excellent education to every child, regardless of their race, family income or disability.

I recognize that there are some legitimate concerns with the current accountability system. And today we have the opportunity to focus on two concerns that have been central to much of the discussion on reauthorization:

- 1) Will a growth model system offer real accountability for student achievement; and
- 2) Are there other credible and reliable academic indicators in addition to standardized tests that can offer an accurate picture of student achievement?

With the system we have currently, what is commonly known as the "status model", we know there are some schools where students are making real progress yet these schools are still not making Adequate Yearly Progress.

For instance, a fifth grader could transfer to a new school reading at the first grade level. The school could make great strides in helping that student read and, over the course of a year, improve enough to read at the third grade level, but the school could miss making Adequate Yearly Progress if that student, and enough others, are still not at grade level.

We also know that the current model of Adequate Yearly Progress, where the performance of one cohort of students is compared against the performance of another cohort of students – so that this year's fifth graders are measured against the achievement of last year's fifth graders, does not allow schools to fully capture the progress of this year's fifth graders as they move from year to year.

Under the current system, a gain or loss in the percentage of students who are proficient could be a result of factors largely outside the school.

At the joint hearing we held in this room last week with members of the House and Senate Education committees, every organization who testified proposed growth models as the solution to these challenges.

Today, we will have the opportunity to examine whether growth models are the answer schools and states are seeking.

The second focus of today's hearing has also generated much debate.

And that is the concern that a single standardized test is too blunt an instrument to fairly and effectively measure school progress.

We have heard from many in the civil rights, education and research communities who acknowledge that using one standardized test to compare students against a single set of high standards is essential to closing the achievement gap.

They have also expressed valid concerns that that single test may not be able to tell us all we need to know about what students and schools can do.

Having the most accurate information on student progress is critical to closing the achievement gap. And, looking at other evidence in addition to state tests may be the way to obtain a more complete view of a child's true progress.

Further, including indicators such as graduation rates and advanced course taking may incentivise progress in closing debilitating achievement gaps in those critical areas.

Today we will hear from leading experts and practitioners on these two complex accountability issues: growth models and multiple indicators.

I look forward to their testimony and ask them to keep in mind three questions as we look for their help in these areas:

- First, are growth models and multiple indicators of performance consistent with No Child Left Behind's goal of ensuring that all children can read and do math at grade level by 2014?
- Second, do states have the capacity they need to ensure that information gathered to determine whether a school or district has made adequate progress is both valid and reliable?
- Third, do these approaches appropriately credit improving schools or do they overstate academic progress? In other words, are they a step forward in offering a fairer, more reliable means of accountability, or are they a step backward – simply another loophole that hinders accountability?

Our collective goal in reauthorizing No Child Left Behind should be to look to those changes that improve the integrity of Act and move us forward towards the stated goal of the Act: to provide opportunity and an excellent education to every child.

I thank the witnesses for their testimony and I now yield to Mr. McKeon for his opening statement.

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