



E-NEWSLETTER

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Schools Paying the Price for High Energy Costs: New Survey Results

In our last issue, we announced the launch of a unique, web-based survey designed to solicit input from school leaders, parents, teachers, and taxpayers about how high energy costs were impacting back-to-school preparations in districts around the nation.

Now, with the 2008-09 school year underway, the results are in. Nearly 1,000 individuals responded to the survey, sharing their stories about how their schools were coping with high energy prices. Some key findings of the survey include:

- 90 percent of the survey's respondents indicated that high gas prices are having an impact on schools in their community.
- 96 percent of respondents demanded that Congress do more to address the energy crisis.
- Nearly half said high fuel costs have forced their schools to cut field trips and after-school activities; one-third reported that high costs forced schools to limit bus routes, and nearly a quarter said rising energy costs have led to higher school lunch prices.

The full survey results and analysis can be viewed online [here](#).

McKeon Calls for Hearing Into Union Misconduct & Financial Abuse Allegations

Amid widespread allegations of [financial mismanagement](#) and other misconduct by leaders of one of the largest local chapters of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), Rep. McKeon has called for a congressional hearing to determine whether federal law has been violated and the extent to which rank-and-file union members have

been put at risk.

Rep. McKeon wrote to the committee's chairman, Rep. George Miller (D-CA), on Sept. 11th and again on the 19th urging him to convene hearings as soon as possible into the matter. Although Rep. McKeon warned that Congress must review this matter before its expected adjournment in early October, the majority has yet to schedule a single hearing.

Rep. McKeon has pledged to continue examining the matter.

Republicans Continue to Monitor Student Loan Access Amid Market Turmoil

The ongoing uncertainty in the U.S. credit markets has continued to impact students and families paying for college and planning for the future, with questions remaining about the long-term stability of the student loan program.



Congress acted earlier this year to shore up the student loan market by passing a temporary measure ([H.R. 5715](#)) to restore liquidity and certainty by providing a federal backstop for the purchase of student loans and by facilitating the expansion of the lender of last resort program, among other temporary reforms. The program has provided a measure of reassurance, and Congress acted earlier this month to extend these measures for another year.

However, Rep. McKeon and other Republicans continue to believe that additional steps may be needed to improve the legislation already enacted or to provide additional flexibility in order to maintain market stability. To that end, Republicans have introduced [a bill](#) to make technical corrections to

the already-enacted *Ensuring Continued Access to Student Loans Act*, and they stand ready to take whatever additional steps are needed to ensure that economic uncertainty today does not limit our economic competitiveness tomorrow.

A Word About Workplace Safety

Looking back on the 110th Congress, these two years under a Democratic majority have brought a significant change to the tenor of the Education and Labor Committee, particularly in the area of workplace safety.



Where once we focused on proven strategies to keep workers safe through cooperation and effective enforcement, now the committee seems more interested in "gotcha" politics than sound policy.

The latest example was the recent hearing on the Department of Labor's plan to increase the transparency, consistency, and scientific reliability of health standard rulemaking. Instead of exploring the issue in a serious way, the Democratic majority chose to hurl political accusations, including the outrageous claim that this proposal – published in the *Federal Register* – was somehow a "secret rule." On an issue this important, surely Congress can do better.

What's Left for 2008?

With the congressional schedule still in flux, we know many of you have questions about what's happening in Congress and in our committee. As a reminder, you can sign up for email updates, including the weekly committee schedule, by emailing Cameron.Coursen@mail.house.gov.