

CONGRESSMAN CHAKA FATTAH

Chaka Fattah is an experienced lawmaker serving in his sixth term in the U.S. House of Representatives. Congressman Fattah represents the Second Congressional District of Pennsylvania, which includes parts of Philadelphia and Cheltenham Township.

SHAPING EDUCATIONAL POLICY

The nationally funded GEAR UP (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs), of which Congressman Fattah was the architect, began with his desire for all children to have an equal opportunity to receive the best education possible. Assisting millions of children, GEAR UP has become the largest pre-college awareness program in this nation's history and has contributed nearly \$2 billion toward the educational advancement of low-income students.

Since being signed into law in 1998, **GEAR UP**, has prepared millions of young students, from inner-cities around the country, to not only enter college, but to succeed once there. While working hard to pass GEAR UP into law, Fattah was sure not to forget about his hometown of Philadelphia. And in 2003 that's exactly what happened when Fattah created a last-dollar scholarship program, which is named the **CORE Philly Scholarship**. The program, which serves students residing in Philadelphia, became the first city-wide scholarship designed to provide assistance to every Philadelphia high school graduate.

CORE Philly – a one-time scholarship grant – is designed to double the number of high school graduates as well as the number of children attending college. Over the past year the program has provided more than 4,000 students with assistance in furthering their education. **CORE Philly**, which awards up to \$3,000 in scholarships to eligible seniors attending Pennsylvania state institutions, has contributed more than \$7 million toward advancing the education of Philadelphia's youth.

Another of Fattah's legislative achievements, **The College Retention Program**, has provided more than a million students with financial assistance in the form of grants, low-interest loans and college work-study programs, in an attempt to help meet the cost of attaining a post-secondary education. The program aims to retain students by offering resources to help them complete school and be fully prepared for success after graduation.

While educational reform has remained paramount throughout Fattah's extensive legislative career, he also has served as an innovative leader in a variety of other legislative areas including public housing reform, job training placement and urban tax policy reforms. Fattah also showcased his commitment to constituent concerns through his actions following the controversial Presidential election of 2000. Fattah was an original co-sponsor of the **Help America Vote Act of 2002**, which provided money to States that replaced controversial punch card voting machines.

During his 12 years of public service to the city of Philadelphia – where he served six years as a state representative and another six as a state senator – Fattah led the way to help local families make the transition from the Federal welfare program to the workforce with the help of job training and work placement programs. In 1986 Fattah developed the annual **Fattah Conference on Higher Education**, which motivated thousands of Philadelphia's youth to pursue a college education. **Read to Lead** – another of Fattah's educational initiatives – provides free books and classroom instruction to more than 5,000 students.

Fattah also serves on the powerful House Appropriations Committee, which oversees more than \$800 billion in discretionary spending. Fattah has served as a member of the Pennsylvania State Board of Education and on the Board of Trustees of Lincoln, Temple and Pennsylvania State Universities, and the Community College of Philadelphia.

In addition to being named one of the country's 50 most promising leaders by *Time Magazine*, Fattah received a ringing endorsement from The Philadelphia Inquirer when the newspaper proclaimed Fattah "has been an effective champion for people in need of affordable housing, young children denied a head start in school, and low-income students trying to finish college and earn advanced degrees."

Re-elected to a sixth term in 2004, Fattah is preparing bold policy initiatives for the 109th Congress. Included in those proposals is the **Transform America Transaction Fee**, which calls on the Department of Treasury to study a proposal to change America's economy by eliminating all Federal taxes on individuals and corporations, and instead replace them with a revenue generating system based on transaction fees. Fattah will also introduce the **Student Bill of Rights**, a proposal that requires states to certify, with the Secretary of Education, that its public school system provides students with equal access to qualified teachers, the opportunity to learn from up-to-date textbooks and access to computers, libraries, and qualified professional personnel.

A life-long resident of Philadelphia, Congressman Fattah attended city public schools, the Community College of Philadelphia, the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School and the University of Pennsylvania's Fels School of State and Local Government where he earned a Master's Degree in Government Administration. Representative Fattah is the proud father of four children and is married to René Chenault-Fattah, who is an attorney and also a news anchorwoman.