



The Olver Report

U.S. REPRESENTATIVE
JOHN W. OLVER

FIRST DISTRICT — MASSACHUSETTS

Berkshire, Hampden, Hampshire, Franklin, Worcester & Middlesex Counties

Education Update

Education is a top priority for Americans. Here's what I'm fighting for in Congress to improve our children's education:

Reducing Class Size

Evidence has consistently shown that smaller classes help teachers provide more personal attention to students, and spend less time on discipline. President Clinton's plan to hire 100,000 new teachers would reduce the class size in grades 1 - 3 to a national average of 18 students per classroom. It's imperative that our students in these early grades get the attention they need and start off their education on the right track. I will continue to push Congress to fund this vital program.

More Qualified Teachers

There is a shortage of qualified math and science teachers. Right now, 56% of high school science courses are taught by teachers not prepared in science. I support providing grants for college students who wish to become science and math teachers, with the commitment that they will teach a minimum of three years.

Special Education

Educators and parents agree that inclusion of disabled students in the regular classroom has a positive effect on all students. However,

providing services for the severely handicapped, which is mandated by federal and state law, is straining local school budgets. The federal government originally promised to pay 40% of the cost of special education, but so far local school districts have seen only 7% of these funds. Congress must live up to this commitment and fully fund special education programs.



Congressman Olver greets 1st District students at the Capitol.

School Modernization

The average age of public schools is now over 42 years. In these old and out-dated buildings, it's often impractical or even impossible to install technology such as high-speed Internet access. A modern, well-equipped learning environment is essential for student achievement. I support HR 4094, a bi-partisan bill which would provide tax credits to pay the interest on \$24.8 billion of school modernization bonds. States would have complete flexibility in allocating the bonds to school districts based on their modernization needs.

Safe Schools

Nothing is more important than the safety of our kids in school. In a recent survey, high school students were asked "Do you believe 'Littleton' could happen in your school?" The majority responded "Yes." While there is no single solution to the problem of youth violence, there are concrete steps that we can take to make our schools safer and more secure. First, our schools need to be able to provide more comprehensive counseling services for troubled students, as soon as problems arise. Strong preventative measures are the key to identifying and defusing dangerous situations before violence occurs. Secondly, I support common-sense gun safety measures such as trigger locks that would make it more

difficult for juveniles to injure themselves or their classmates. It is tragic that the Republican leadership will not allow consideration of a bill to require these safety devices which could clearly save lives.

Early Childhood Education

Head Start, which gives our neediest students a jump-start on education, has been an unqualified success. By beginning the educational process at ages 3 and 4, the program has laid the groundwork for thousands of students to succeed in school. Unfortunately, Head Start is only available to a small percentage of our nation's children. I support expanding Head Start so that more children can take advantage of this crucial early childhood learning program.



Congressman Olver visits the Conte Community School in Pittsfield to talk to students about legislation to get more computers in classrooms.

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