

**Opening Statement, Committee Organization
Chairman George Miller (D-CA)
Education and Labor Committee
January 24, 2007**

Let me welcome all the returning members.

I would like to begin by welcoming Buck McKeon as our ranking member –not only has he been the chair of this committee--- but a very active member prior to being the chair –as a member of the higher ed subcommittee and worked on the 1998 reauthorization reaching a bi partisan agreement with Mr. Kildee.

He has also proven to be a very conscientious and effective member of this committee.

I look forward to working with him in the best bipartisan tradition of this committee.

I have served as chair of select comm.. and the Committee on Natural Resources.

In 1992 when Don Young succeeded me as the chair of the Natural Resources Committee I told

the chairman of that committee when he had the votes vote.

I said that not to be partisan, but to recognize that the Majority had shifted. I said the same to Chairman John Boehner.

I am a partisan in the best sense of the word and proud of it –I defend what I believe.

Yet, my most important legislative accomplishments have been bipartisan and I am proud of that fact. And believe that is the art of governing it is my intention to meet and consult with Mr. McKeon and ask the question--- can we work together on this – recognizing that we will not always agree. That is not the point.

The point is to be respectful of others and to explore the alternatives for problem solving and legislating. Most of the time. I was extended this opportunity by John Boehner and I appreciated it.

I expect to operate in the same manner.

When we passed No Child Left Behind we made a decision that good enough was not good enough for America's children or for America. I believe that this committee is dedicated to this principle that we are here to help along with parents and families, teachers and communities to create paths to excellence for all our children.

It is in this spirit that I seek the help of every member of this committee during the reauthorization of NCLB. This bipartisan effort has been given a head start when Chairman McKeon called the first oversight hearings in the last congress. I plan to build on them.

While progress is being made and wonderful examples of achievement are reported all of the time, they are still too few.

The students who are making strides are too few, the states that are changing patterns of achievement for poor and minority children are too few.

Everyday lives are transformed and opportunities to learn are created by highly effective and skilled teachers –but they are too few.

But what we have learned over these past five years is that it is possible.

The goal of the reauthorization is to begin by listening to those with everyday experience and those who have been studying our successes and the needs for improvement and so that NCLB can continue to be a catalyst for change and to spread the success.

Higher education—every member of this committee understands the need for our country and its economy to make a college diploma as common tomorrow as a high school diploma is today. I look forward to working with the subcommittee chair and senior republican member all the members to this end.

This committee also has wide jurisdiction for the health and safety and retirement security of American workers while they are at work.

We are also the protector of their rights at work so that they can properly provide for their families in a workplace that is fair in its treatment of workers and where workers who seek to organize their workplace are free to do so without intimidation and illegal actions taken against them.

This committee also has a responsibility to make sure that the American workplace remains among the most competitive in the world.

To do so we must do our part to expand the opportunities for American workers to be the best educated and best trained workers in our history.

I hope that we will be able to create support and expand public private partnerships at every level of this effort.

I am passionate about the idea that the children of America have the opportunities to take advantage of the best that America has to offer.

I look forward to working with all of the talent on this committee to realize that goal.