

EDUCATION

Congressman Jim Gerlach is a tremendous supporter of public education and has voted time and time again for legislation aimed at strengthening this valuable institution and improving the offerings for children throughout the country. In an effort to better support public education, Representative Gerlach recently became a cosponsor of 11 key education bills. This legislation ranges from an anti-bullying measure to a bill that would increase the tax deduction for teachers' expenses. The one thing all these bills have in common is that, if passed and signed into law, they would improve public education. These bills are explained below:

- H.R. 49 - Eating Disorders Awareness, Prevention, and Education Act
The bill would amend the Elementary and Secondary Education Act to authorize the use of innovative assistance funds for programs to: (1) improve identification of students with eating disorders; (2) increase awareness of such disorders among parents and students; and (3) train educators with respect to effective eating disorder prevention and assistance methods. The bill would also require the National Center for Education Statistics and the National Center for Health Statistics to: (1) study the impact eating disorders have on educational advancement and achievement; (2) report on current State and local programs to educate youth on the dangers of eating disorders; and (3) recommend Federal, State, and local measures that could be undertaken.

The bill is currently pending before the House Education and Workforce Committee and has 11 cosponsors.

- H.R. 147 - Social Security Fairness Act
The bill would fully repeal the Government Pension Offset and Windfall Elimination Provision, which unfairly reduce Social Security benefits of public employees.

The bill is currently pending before the House Ways and Means Committee and has 283 cosponsors.

- H.R. 284 -

Amends the *Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act* to: (1) include bullying and harassment under the definition of violence; and (2) provide for programs to address and prevent bullying and harassment.

The bill is currently pending before the House Education and Workforce Committee as has 30 cosponsors.

- H.R. 986 - Teacher Tax Credit Act

The bill would amend the Internal Revenue Code to allow an eligible educator an annual \$2,000 tax credit. Defines: (1) "eligible educator" as an individual who is a kindergarten through grade 12 teacher, instructor, counselor, principal, or aide in an eligible elementary or secondary school for at least 900 hours during a school year; and (2) "eligible elementary or secondary school" as a school that is eligible for schoolwide assistance under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965.

The bill is currently pending before the House Ways and Means Committee and has 47 cosponsors.

- H.R. 1177 - State and Local Education Flexibility Act

The bill would make changes to No Child Left Behind (NCLB) including: allowing states the flexibility to implement a localized testing system instead of statewide tests, allowing states to test students with cognitive disabilities based on their IEP under IDEA, providing flexibility in testing of Limited English Proficiency (LEP) students, and providing flexibility to special education teachers and rural school teachers who teach multiple subjects to meet the highly qualified requirements of NCLB.

The bill is currently pending before the House Education and Workforce Committee and has 5 cosponsors.

- H.R. 1506 - No Child Left Behind Reform Act

The bill would amend NCLB to allow school ratings to be based on more than standardized test scores, allow use of growth models to track individual student achievement, allow schools to target supplemental services and school choice to students who need them most, and grant

additional flexibility for middle school teachers in meeting "highly qualified" requirements.

The bill is currently pending before the House Education and Workforce Committee and has 11 cosponsors.

- H.R. 1722 -

The bill would amend Adequate Yearly Progress provisions for assessing students with disabilities and recent refugee students.

The bill is currently pending before the House Education and Workforce Committee and has 3 cosponsors.

- H.R. 1853 -

The bill would require the total amount of funds awarded to a State under part A (Improving Basic Programs Operated by Local Educational Agencies) of title I (Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 for each of FY 2005 and 2006 to be not less than the total amount of funds awarded to the State under part A for FY 2003. Directs the Secretary of Education to pay a supplementary amount to any State that did not receive such required minimum hold-harmless amount in FY 2005.

The bill is currently pending before the House Education and Workforce Committee and has 2 cosponsors.

- H.R. 2533 -

The bill would protect the flow of E-Rate funds to schools and libraries by exempting the program from accounting rules under the Antideficiency Act.

The bill is currently pending before the House Energy and Commerce Committee and has 44 cosponsors.

- H.R. 2835 - Teacher Excellence for All Children Act

The bill would establish financial incentives to recruit new teachers, create high quality comprehensive induction programs for new teachers, provide premium pay for teachers in hard-to-staff schools , create

career ladders for teachers, and offer additional tax benefits to help retain teachers.

The bill is pending before the House Education and Workforce and Ways and Means Committees and has 59 cosponsors.

- H.R. 2989 - Teacher Tax Relief Act

The bill would amend the Internal Revenue Code to: (1) increase the allowable tax deduction for the expenses of elementary and secondary school teachers to \$400; (2) allow the deduction of professional development expenses; and (3) make such deduction permanent.

The bill is pending before the House Ways and Means Committee and has 55 cosponsors.

Title I, IDEA & Head Start Funding

Since coming to Congress, Representative Gerlach has consistently supported increased investment in critical federal programs to support and improve public education. Three programs in particular are absolutely vital, these are Title I, IDEA and Head Start. Below is an explanation of funding levels provided for these programs since 1999. Note that Representative Gerlach was elected to Congress in 2002 and one of his first votes in Congress, after taking office in January 2003, was on the Fiscal Year 2003 Omnibus Appropriations Act which provided an 18.6% increase in IDEA funding.

	FY1999	FY2000	FY2001	FY2002	FY2003	FY2004	FY2005
IDEA	\$5.055	\$5.755 +13.8%	\$7.113 +23.7%	\$7.528 +5.8%	\$8.929 +18.6%	\$10.129 +13.4%	\$10.675 +5.4%
Title I	\$7.852	\$8.111 +3.3%	\$8.762 +8%	\$10.350 +18.1%	\$11.864 +14.6%	\$12.412 +4.6%	\$12.842 +3.5%
Head Start	\$4.660	\$5.267 +13%	\$6.200 +17.7%	\$6.537 +5.4%	\$6.668 +2%	\$6.816 +2.2%	\$6.99 +2.55%

In billions of dollars (source: Congressional Research Service)

Overall, spending for IDEA, Title 1 and Head Start have seen significant increases from FY1999-FY2005:

IDEA - +100.11%

Title I - +63.6%

Head Start - +50%

While more work remains to be done, Congress has provided historic increases for these programs over the past decade. The Fiscal Year 2006 Labor, HHS & Education bill was recently agreed to in the U.S. House of Representatives. This bill provides a 4.6% increase for Title I, a 4.7% increase for IDEA and a .6% increase for Head Start. It is expected that the Senate will have more favorable funding levels and those levels will be ultimately adopted.

The House of Representatives agreed to this funding bill, H.R. 3010, on June 24, 2005 by a 250-151 margin.

It is important to note that even though historic increases have been made, the federal government is still far short of funding IDEA to its fully authorized level. For this reason, Representative Gerlach has supported legislation to reach the full 40% commitment by 2011 and make IDEA funding mandatory.