

The backbone of American society is our world-class education system. But we've seen some worrisome cracks in recent years, damage that will take a combined effort to repair. We must strengthen our public education system, returning it to the strengths that made our nation so successful. We must ensure the equality of opportunity that we've come to expect; only then will our students succeed.

Congress in 2001 passed the No Child Left Behind Act, known as NCLB, which was intended to hold schools accountable for student performance and provide schools the resources they need. But as we've seen, there are some serious problems with NCLB that must be addressed. NCLB in the past has lacked proper funding to achieve its goals while at the same time directing too much attention to standardized testing at the expense of a proper education. Congress continues to work on reforming this initiative.

Bills I have cosponsored during the 111th Congress (2009-2010):

- [H.R. 2262](#) - Safe Schools Improvement Act of 2009 - Amends the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act to require that states work to prevent and respond to incidents of bullying and harassment.
- [H.R. 1091](#) - Student Privacy Protection Act of 2009 - Requires that schools receiving federal funds provide military recruiters, upon their request, with access to student information only if the student's parent has given written consent.
- [H.R. 702](#) - PRE-K Act - Sets federal standards for high-quality pre-kindergarten education, offering incentive grants to states to improve their pre-k programs.

Important achievements during the 110th Congress (2007-2008):

- In August 2008, the president signed the Higher Education Opportunity Act ([H.R. 4137](#)), which gave colleges incentives to rein in tuition increases, made textbook costs more manageable and simplified the federal student aid application process.
- In September 2007, the president signed the "College Cost Reduction Act" ([H.R. 2669](#)), which contained the single largest investment in college financial assistance since the 1944 GI Bill, including increasing the maximum Pell Grant by \$1,090 -- to \$5,400 -- by 2012, cutting

interest rates in half on need-based college loans and providing loan repayment for those who enter public service careers.

- In December 2007, the president signed the "Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act," ([H.R. 1429](#)), a bill that reauthorized and improved the Head Start Program. The bipartisan legislation improves teacher and classroom quality, strengthens Head Start's focus on school readiness, expands access to Head Start for more children, ensures that centers are well-run, boosts coordination between Head Start and state and local programs and improves comprehensive services that help children by helping their families.