

Legislation Advances to Provide Scholarships to Math and Science Teachers

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Rep. Rothman Helps Advance Bill to Provide Scholarships to Math and Science Teachers

(Washington, DC)—Congressman Steve Rothman (D-NJ), a member of the House Science and Technology Committee, yesterday voted for legislation to ensure that the U.S. has an abundance of qualified, well-equipped math and science teachers in grades K-12. The bill, "10,000 Teachers, 10 Million Minds" Science and Math Scholarship Act (H.R.362), originated in the Science Committee and passed the House of Representatives by a vote of 389 to 22. It authorizes additional science scholarships for educating math and science teachers and amends current program requirements based on recommendations by the National Academy of Sciences.

"In their report on U.S. competitiveness, the National Academies told us that the #1 thing we can do as a country for our future economic health is invest in our science and math teachers. That's what this bill - which seeks to recruit and educate 10,000 math and science teachers each year - does and I am proud to support it," said Rothman.

The above-mentioned report is titled *Rising Above the Gathering Storm: Energizing and Employing America for a Brighter Economic Future*. In it, the Academies' highest priority recommendation is to improve K-12 math and science education, and the Academies' first recommended action item is to institute a major scholarship program like the one made possible by H.R. 362. The Academies noted that without immediate action, the U.S. may not be able to maintain global leadership in innovation and education.

Among the factors contributing to this conclusion, the Academies' panelists found that in 2000 more than 85% of students in grades 5-9 were taught physical science by a teacher lacking a major or certification in the physical sciences. In 1999, 68% of U.S. 8th grade students received instruction from a mathematics teacher who did not hold a degree or certification in mathematics.

"When I ask many of today's successful scientists and engineers why they decided to pursue careers in these fields, the most common answer I hear is that they were inspired by a great teacher at a young age. Every child deserves the chance to excel in these areas - and we can make sure that our K-12 science and math teachers get the support they need to be as effective as possible in the classroom," added Rothman.

Specifically, "10,000 Teachers, 10 Million Minds" will create thousands of new teachers each year, with expertise in their subject area, via the Noyce Scholarship Program at the National Science Foundation (NSF). The bill also creates summer institutes and graduate programs that provide sustained content-oriented professional development to teachers through Math Science Partnerships at NSF.

H.R. 362 has been endorsed by a broad range of businesses and universities as well as industry and education groups, including the Business Roundtable, Association of American Universities, Council on Competitiveness, the College Board, Semiconductor Industry Association and the Business Software Alliance.

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