

Rothman 'Secure Our Schools Act' Receives Federal Funding

July 17, 2001

Rothman 'Secure Our Schools Act' Receives Federal Funding First National Funding Program to Solely Address Weapons-Free Schools

Washington, DC -- Congressman Steve Rothman announced that local school districts will soon have a major resource to keep guns and other weapons out of our children's classrooms. Rothman's Secure Our Schools Act, the first national funding program to solely address school safety, has been funded for \$2 million in the House Commerce-Justice-State Appropriations Bill which passed the House of Representatives Wednesday night by a vote of 408-19.

"For the first time ever, we have a program that is solely devoted to keeping guns and other weapons out of our children's classrooms," Rothman said. "I believe this will make a real difference to protect the safety of our children." The Secure Our Schools Act will be administered by the Office of Justice Programs in the Department of Justice. The program is designed to help any school in America that requests funds to install metal detectors, security cameras, train personnel or take other steps to keep their schools weapons free. The security measures are not mandated by the federal government on local schools. Instead, if local school boards choose to, they can apply to receive federal matching funds for locally selected security measures.

Rothman built a bipartisan coalition to pass and fund the Secure Our Schools Act. With the help of former Judiciary Committee Chairman Henry Hyde (R-IL), Rothman passed the bill through that committee in May, 2000. He then worked with the Chairman of the House Commerce-Justice-State Subcommittee, Rep. Frank Wolf (R-VA) to fund the bill in the FY 2002 budget.

"I am pleased with the bipartisan support for the Secure Our Schools Act," Rothman said. "I believe it is vitally important that we let the American people know the safety of our children is not a partisan issue."

Department of Education studies show that of the 88,223 elementary and secondary schools in the United States, 84% have low security.

Rothman introduced the Secure Our Schools Act in April, 2000 while meeting with students at an anti-violence rally in Fort Lee (NJ) High School. Since then, students from many local area schools have written to him in support of his proposal. The measure unanimously passed by the House Judiciary Committee and later passed as part of the Violence Against Women Act a few weeks later, which passed Congress in October, 2000 and was then signed into law by President Clinton.

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