

The Monthly Legislative Update
From the IRA Government Relations Division
June 4, 2007

Funding and NCLB Moving

Introduction and Overview

The Congress is moving quickly on two critical sets of issues, the rewriting of NCLB and the funding for literacy programs. This update is going to provide you with information on what is happening and suggest that you take action.

Additional funds for education in budget

Budget and Appropriations

Federal spending on education programs could increase significantly next year under the plan laid out in the budget resolution. The resolution sets the discretionary spending for the federal government. The process is directing that over \$ 9 billion additional dollars – above the president’s plan be spent on education programs.

As early as this week, the House subcommittee on appropriations for the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and related agencies will be meeting to formulate their respective spending bills for FY08.

IRA funding recommendations

IRA is requesting the following spending levels for federal literacy programs:

Title I Grants to LEA’s	\$14 billion
Even Start	\$250,000 million
Early Reading First	\$120,000 million
Reading First	\$ 1,041 billion
Striving Readers	\$200 million

Other Literacy Programs:

Literacy through Libraries	\$25 million
Reading is Fundamental	\$30 million
National Writing Project	\$25 million
Adult Basic and Literacy Education	\$700 million
National Institute for Literacy	\$7 million

If your Representative is one of the following, please consider writing them and asking them to support these spending levels.

They can be contacted thru the following link:

<http://www.house.gov/house/MemberWWW.shtml>

Contact your member of Congress if on appropriations committees

House subcommittee members:

Majority

Chair: Dave Obey (WI)

Nita M. Lowey (NY)

Rosa L. DeLauro (CT)

Jesse L. Jackson, Jr. (IL)

Patrick J. Kennedy (RI)

Lucille Roybal-Allard (CA)

Barbara Lee (CA)

Tom Udall (NM)

Michael Honda (CA)

Betty McCollum (MN)

Tim Ryan (OH)

MINORITY

Ranking Member:

James T. Walsh (NY)

Ralph Regula (OH)

John E. Peterson (PA)

Dave Weldon (FL)

Michael K. Simpson (ID)

Dennis R. Rehberg (MT)

Jerry Lewis (CA), Ex Officio

Senate:

Majority

Senator Tom Harkin (Chairman) (IA)

Senator Daniel Inouye (HI)

Senator Herb Kohl (WI)

Senator Patty Murray (WA)

Senator Mary Landrieu (LA)

Senator Richard Durbin (IL)

Senator Jack Reed (RI)

Senator Frank Lautenberg (NJ)

Minority

Senator Arlen Specter (Ranking Member) (PA)

Senator Thad Cochran (MS)

Senator Judd Gregg (NH)

Senator Larry Craig (ID)

Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison (TX)

Senator Ted Stevens (AK)

Senator Richard Shelby (AL)

Contact your Senators and ask them to support increased funding for literacy instruction

http://www.senate.gov/general/contact_information/senators_cfm.cfm

NCLB being drafted now

NCLB reauthorization

The House Education and Labor Committee could begin considering a draft reauthorization bill as early as mid-June. In the Senate, Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee Chairman Edward M. Kennedy (D-MA) also hopes to have a reauthorization bill ready for consideration by late July. These base introduction bills will provide the main framework of the reauthorization.

On May 16, members of the House Education and Labor Committee held a bipartisan meeting to hear recommendations and concerns from other members of Congress on ways to improve the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB).

*Key issues the
House is working
on to rewrite
NCLB*

“Chairman Miller’s press release about the meeting is available at http://www.house.gov/apps/list/speech/edlabor_dem/RelMay16NCLB.html .
Look for prospective changes to current law in the following areas:
Teacher quality
Teacher preparation
AYP
Sanctions
Assessments

IRA’s recommendations for NCLB can be found on the IRA website.

*Adolescent literacy
legislation moving
in both chambers*

Striving Readers S.958 and H.R. 2289

IRA has been working for several years to create an adolescent literacy initiative. We have been working with the National Association of Secondary School Principals and the Alliance for Excellent Education has worked for the past year to expand the Striving Readers program. This Act will authorize adolescent literacy grants to be awarded to states on a formula basis according to poverty levels and 8th grade NAEP reading scores. Local districts will be able to use these funds to develop schoolwide literacy plans and provide professional development in core academic subjects.

Striving Readers Bills have been introduced in both the Senate (S. 958 on March 22) and House (H.R. 2289 on May 14)

Has your Representative become a House co-sponsor?

Sponsors to date Representatives John Yarmuth (D-KY) Todd Platts (R-PA) Boyd (D-FL), Chandler (D-KY), Hinojosa (D-TX), McGovern (D-WA), Jackson-Lee (D-TX), Rogers (R-AL), Bonner (R-AL), Regula (R-OH), Grijalva (D-AZ), Altmire (D-PA), Hirono (D-HI), Davis (D-IL), Payne (D-NJ), Hare (D-IL), Clark (D-NY)

If not please contact them and urge them to become a cosponsor. House website:

<http://www.house.gov/house/MemberWWW.shtml>

Has your Senator become a co-sponsor?

Senator Jeff Sessions (R-AL) and Senator Patty Murray (D-WA)
Cosponsors: Senators Kerry, Cochran, Akaka, Lott, Dodd, Burr, Bingaman, Lincoln, Domenici, Isakson, Durbin, Harkin, Murkowski, Brown and Bayh

If not please contact them and urge them to become a cosponsor.

Senate website: http://www.senate.gov/general/contact_information/senators_cfm.cfm

The Teach Act H.R. 2204 S.1339

New initiative for teachers

Introduced by Chairman Kennedy in the Senate and Chairman Miller in the House to improve recruitment, preparation, distribution and retention of teachers and principals. This is an important initiative that can make a big difference. Please consider writing your member of Congress to ask for their support.

Reading cited as area of national need

Summary of IRA interests:

TEACH Grants Undergraduate grants up to \$16,000 and graduate grants up to \$8,000 for teachers who teach for 4 years within an 8 year period in the following fields:

Math, science, foreign language, bilingual education, or special education or a reading specialist or another field documented by the federal government. Reading is considered a high need subject.

Reading Specialists education supported

Graduated loan forgiveness for Reading Specialists

Career ladder Teacher Program Grant to LEA's

Federal augmentation of pay (\$4,000 - 10,000) for mentors, coaches, school leadership teams.

Teacher Centers

Provide intensive professional development and support to improve instruction

Tax relief on added compensation for high needs subject teachers and principals.

Portions of this bill are expected to be included in Title II of NCLB reauthorization, Title II of HEA reauthorization and a tax bill.

To support this bill contact your Senator or Representative:

Senate:

http://www.senate.gov/general/contact_information/senators_cfm.cfm

House:

<http://www.house.gov/house/MemberWWW.shtml>

Adult Ed – Higher Education – Head Start

Adult education changes in Workforce Investment Act

In addition the Congress is working on several other reauthorizations that will impact the literacy community. Congress is currently considering legislation to reauthorize and improve the **Adult Education and Family Literacy Act**, Title II of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998. This act is important to family literacy because the law

New Head Start has many changes that will impact early childhood literacy

specifies family literacy as an option to meet adult education and literacy needs. One of the purposes of the act is to "assist adults who are parents to obtain the educational skills necessary to become full partners in the educational development of their children." Family literacy programs are eligible providers under this law. The provisions of the act are administered by the U.S. Department of Education.

The "Improving Head Start Act of 2007" passed the House with a bipartisan vote of 365-48 on May 2, 2007. H.R. 1429 will help more children arrive at kindergarten ready to succeed by improving program quality and expanding access to more children. The bill:

***Improves Classroom and Teacher Quality** –Requires each Head Start agency to ensure that all of its teachers receive ongoing training in language and emergent literacy.

***Expands Access** – Authorizes \$450 million in new funding for fiscal year 2008 which would provide up to 10,000 more children access to the program.

*** Strengthens the Focus on School Readiness** – Ensures all programs use research-based practices to support the growth of children's pre-literacy and vocabulary skills.

*** Ends Inappropriate Testing of 4-Year Olds** - Prohibits further use of the National Reporting System.

***Promotes Stronger Accountability**

*** Ensures Parental Participation in Program Governance**

***Fortifies Comprehensive Services** – Places greater emphasis on early identification of child and family mental health needs

Higher Education Act moving in House and Senate – Teach Act provisions may end up here.

The reauthorization of the **Higher Education Act (HEA)** was last renewed in 1998. Many of the law's provisions were set to expire in 2003, but Congress has passed renewals to extend the measure to June 30, 2007. The legislation authorizes many federal higher education programs, including Pell Grants, student loans, and initiatives in teacher education.

Title II of HEA provides funding to improve the quality of teacher education programs and to recruit teachers to serve in high-need schools. Title II of the No Child Left Behind law provides grants to states to improve teacher quality and reduce class sizes. The reauthorization of the two laws provides Congress an opportunity to consider whether they are aligned with respect to teacher preparation.

In closing... a call to action....

This update contains several requests for action. Please look to see which committee your member of Congress is on and write them on the issue that they are addressing this month.

If you have only one issue to write on, choose the Teach Act. It is unique in that it makes reading specialists an area of national need – for the first time and provides resources that can be built on. Calling a Congressional office can be as easy as 202-225-3121 and asking for your member of Congress or Senator. It takes only a few moments. Each call or letter counts.

If you have any questions, please feel free to call the Washington Office of IRA at 202-624-8800 or irawash@reading.org.