

6/20/2005 Moran Sponsors Bill to Give States More Flexibility in Education Policy

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WASHINGTON, D.C. - Congressman Jerry Moran has sponsored legislation in response to growing concerns by educators about the restrictions placed on schools and classrooms by the education plan, No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Moran's legislation, the State and Local Education Flexibility Act of 2005, works to increase local control and flexibility in education, while maintaining the high education standards Kansas schools have always worked toward.

"In all the rhetoric and discussion about school funding and No Child Left Behind, we must remember one thing - Kansas already has great schools," Moran said. "This legislation will help Kansas schools maintain their already high standards and ensure that control over education remains with the local teachers and school districts."

While Moran voted against NCLB because of concerns that the legislation would place too many federal restrictions on the classroom, he has been meeting with and working with teachers and school administrators to make sure that the law works. The legislation sponsored by Moran allows schools greater flexibility to implement NCLB, while still ensuring that children learn and schools in need of improvement are identified.

The legislation sponsored by Moran ensures that school administrators have the flexibility to include special education students when calculating high school graduation rates. It gives states the option to assess the educational needs of non-English speaking students differently, or not at all, if the student is in their first full year of schooling in the state. The legislation also provides states with the flexibility to consider special education and rural teachers who teach multiple academic subjects as "highly-qualified" in all subject areas if they meet certain requirements. This is particularly important in rural Kansas, where teachers often teach several subjects and it is difficult for that educator to become certified in all areas.

"Kansas teachers already must pass rigorous standards before they ever step into a classroom," Moran said. "This legislation allows our educators to spend more time with students and less time completing additional credentialing requirements and coursework. The last thing we want is for classrooms to become a bureaucracy where teachers spend more time filling out paperwork than teaching our children."

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