

Education Legislative Monitor

Congressman Jim Nussle

Manchester, Iowa

Summer 2004

Jim Nussle's Agenda for Iowa...

***Protect our
Nation with
Homeland Security***

***Strengthen the
Family Farm***

***Fair Taxation &
Responsible Budgets***

***Long-term
Energy Strategies***

***Retirement Security
for All Iowans***

***Strengthen Medicare
& Ensure Health
Care Access***

***Student-centered
Education with
Local Control***

***Keep Promises
Made to Our
Nation's Veterans***

***Grow Our Economy
to Create Jobs***

Nussle Agenda for Student-Centered Education with Local Control

"No child should be left behind in Iowa's public education system. The federal government has a limited, but important role in helping to achieve that goal. We must reform education to ensure that high standards and accountability are part of the public education system controlled by teachers and parents in our local communities. The federal government must meet its funding obligations so as to prevent unfunded federal mandates that tie the hands of local school districts."

Jim Nussle

Jim has worked on Iowa's education priorities since coming to Congress and will continue to work on these priorities in the 108th Congress.

Jim is working to achieve a positive legislative agenda for local control of education in Iowa. After countless meetings with Iowa educators and parents, as well as through letters, e-mails and phone calls, he has created the following goals.

Reforming Education with Local Control Goals:

1. Local Control
2. Accountability
3. Testing Created and Delivered Locally
4. Choice for Parents
5. Individuals with Disability Education Act (IDEA) Full Funding

In order to achieve the goals to leave no child behind by reforming education with local control, Jim has sponsored and co-sponsored many pieces of legislation and, as the House Budget Committee Chairman, he has written many education items into his budget. You will find a listing of these items on the following pages.

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Nussle's Education Agenda Legislation:

FY 2005 Budget (S. Con. Res. 95)

- The budget resolution gives priority status to education funding for 2005. It calls for an increase of \$750 million for programs including special education grants to states, Title I and Pell grants.
- *Constructed by Rep. Nussle. Approved by the House of Representatives on May 19, 2004.*

Improving Education Results for Children with Disabilities Act (H.R. 1350)

- Reauthorizes the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).
- Substantially reduces paperwork requirements of annual individualized education plans (IEPS).
- Grants school districts greater flexibility in using their funding to more accurately classify students to avoid wrongly identifying as disabled those who may have a less severe condition.
- Increases the flexibility of school districts in making decisions about discipline for individual special education students.
- *Approved by the House of Representatives on April 30, 2003.*

No Child Left Behind Act (H.R. 1)

- Reauthorizes the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), including programs vital to Iowa schools such as Title 1 for disadvantaged students, the Safe and Drug-Free Schools program and the 21st Century Community Learning Centers Act.
- Provides comprehensive education reform efforts targeted at narrowing the achievement gap and providing local schools with more flexibility and control of their individual education goals.
- *Co-Sponsored by Rep. Nussle. Approved by the House on December 13, 2001 by a vote of 381-41. Approved by the Senate on December 18, 2001 by a vote of 87-10. Signed into law by the President on January 8, 2002.*
- *Iowa's Accountability Plan under No Child Left Behind was approved on June 6, 2003.*

FY 2004 Department of Education Appropriations (H.R. 2660)

- Provides \$56 billion for the Department of Education, a \$2.9 billion increase from FY2003.
- Provides \$12.4 billion for Title I funding and \$10.1 billion for special education grants.
- **Rural Education Achievement Program—provides \$168 million for small rural schools.**
- *Approved by Congress on January 22, 2004. Signed into law by the President on January 23, 2004.*

School Readiness Act (H.R. 2210)

- Reauthorizes and reforms the Head Start program so that the achievement gap between low-income students and their more affluent peers can be closed.
- Creates an eight-state pilot project that allows states greater flexibility in funding.
- *Approved by the House of Representatives on July 23, 2003.*

Teacher Recruitment Act (H.R. 438)

- Expands loan forgiveness programs for teachers of math, science, and special education.
- *Approved by the House of Representatives on July 9, 2003.*

Ready to Teach Act (H.R. 2211)

- Aligns Higher Education Act teacher training standards with new standards under NCLB.
- Maintains highly qualified teachers in every classroom.
- *Approved by the House of Representatives on July 23, 2003.*

Tax Initiatives

Health and Higher Education Facilities Improvement Act (H.R. 661)

- Improves investment capabilities for small private colleges to improve their facilities and infrastructure.
- *Sponsored by Rep. Nussle.*

Job Creation and Worker Assistance Act (H.R. 3090)

- Provides an annual tax credit of up to \$250 for classroom supplies for all eligible teachers.
- *Approved by Congress on March 8, 2002. Signed into law by the President on March 9, 2002.*

Restoring Earnings to Lift Individuals and Empower Families Act -RELIEF Act

- Raises the annual contribution limit for education IRAs from \$500 to \$2,000. Expands education IRAs to cover elementary and secondary education expenses.
- Provides an above-the-line deduction for qualified higher education expenses.
- Expands the student loan interest tax deduction beyond 60 months.
- Excludes the distribution from qualified tuition plans from gross income.
- Permanently extends the employee exclusion for employer-provided education assistance.
- Expands qualified state tuition plans to include approved private colleges and universities.
- *Approved by Congress on May 26, 2001. Signed into law by the President on June 7, 2001.*