

WASHINGTON, DC - Congressman Steny Hoyer released the following statement today in recognition of the founding of the first public school in America in 1635.

"On April 23, 1635, the Boston Latin School was founded in Boston Massachusetts by Rev. John Cotton. As the first publicly sponsored school in America, Boston Latin School is a historical landmark in the design and development of our schools and how students are educated.

"As society has modernized, new influences have forced our educational establishments to make improvements. The design of our schools has compensated by including new resources and technologies.

"Congress has also recognized the need to continually assess our public schools to ensure that our students are receiving the education they need to be successful. This is why in 2001, I supported, and Congress passed, the bipartisan No Child Left Behind Act, a comprehensive overhaul of the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).

"No Child Left Behind was intended to better target federal investment in our schools, in return for greater accountability and higher standards. And, I continue to want this measure to succeed.

"The reforms in No Child Left Behind are just beginning to have meaningful impact. Yet, states and school systems are reporting that they are not getting the additional resources they need, and that their fiscal problems are adversely affecting their ability to carry out this law.

"Regrettably, President Bush and Congressional Republicans have repeatedly reneged on their commitments to fund and nurture this initiative, preventing millions of dollars from flowing into our states so that public schools can fulfill the changes called for in the bill. Since he signed No Child Left Behind into law, the President's budget requests have consistently proposed insufficient funding for the programs called for in the law. Just four months after he signed the bill, the President's fiscal year 2003 budget actually proposed to cut funding for No Child Left Behind by \$90 million, and his fiscal year 2004 budget request again proposed to cut funding for No Child Left Behind by \$1.2 billion.

"No better, the budget passed in the House of Representatives falls \$8.8 billion below the level Congress authorized when we passed the No Child Left Behind bill in 2001. This is just a slight increase over the President's fiscal year 2005 budget request which fell \$9.4 billion below what is authorized in the law. With inflation and continued enrollment growth, what would appear to be a meager increase would actually result in a cut in funding for schools.

"I supported an alternative budget that over the next five years would have provided \$9.8 billion more than the budget passed in the House of Representatives, and \$22.7 billion more than the what was proposed by the President, in order to provide the reforms - and the resources - to raise achievement in our public schools. This funding would also support special education programs, higher education, and training and social services programs - all programs that saw deep cuts in the budgets proposed by the President and passed in the House.

"Our schoolchildren shouldn't have to settle for lost opportunities. I call on the President and my Republican colleagues to make a committed investment in our children's future by fulfilling the promises of No Child Left Behind in 2005."

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