

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Congressman Steny Hoyer (D-MD) released the following statement today in response to President Bush's visit to Bethesda, Maryland to talk about the "No Child Left Behind Act"(NCLB):

"Since its passage in early 2002, I have been a strong supporter of the landmark education reform law No Child Left Behind (NCLB), which aimed to better target federal investment in our schools in return for greater accountability and higher standards. I continue to want this measure to succeed and I am impressed with the work of Maryland's educators, under the leadership of Maryland School Superintendent Nancy Grasmick, toward raising the educational achievement of all Maryland students.

"However, for this measure to succeed, schools must have the resources they need to implement their plans to raise standards and ensure accountability. Regrettably, President Bush and Congressional Republicans have repeatedly reneged on their commitment to invest in this initiative, preventing Maryland's schools and schools throughout the country from receiving the funding they need to fulfill the reforms.

"The President's claim that he is living up to his education promises is simply not accurate. The President has consistently proposed budgets that would invest significantly less for NCLB programs than what he promised to support when he signed the bill into law. In fact, his latest budget request for fiscal year 2005 underfunds NCLB programs by \$9.4 billion below the amount that is authorized, for a cumulative shortfall of over \$26 billion since the bill was signed into law.

"Just four months after the Rose Garden signing ceremony, his fiscal year 2003 budget proposed cutting funding by \$90 million below what was appropriated in 2002. And, he proposed cutting funding by \$1.2 billion in his fiscal year 2004 budget below the level appropriated in FY 2003.

"House Democrats proposed an alternative budget that over the next five years would have provided \$22.7 billion more than the President's budget for education, training, and social services programs. Democrats want to provide the resources necessary to enact reform and raise achievement in our public schools and also support special education programs, higher education, and training and social services programs.

"Maryland's schoolchildren shouldn't have to settle for lost opportunities. Instead, they need new leadership on fulfilling the promises of No Child Left Behind."

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