

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Congressman Steny H. Hoyer (D-MD) was honored today by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) and the Citi Foundation with the 2007 Friend of Maryland Education Award for his leadership on education issues and his commitment to Maryland's schools and children. The award presentation coincides with American Education Week (Nov. 11-17) and the House's passage today of the Head Start for School Readiness Act to strengthen the nation's early childhood development programs for low-income youth.

"Improving the quality of education for our children has always been a priority and a passion of mine," stated Rep. Hoyer. "My wife Judy was a teacher who devoted her life's work to our schools and children, and it is in tribute to her legacy that I proudly accept this award."

Congressman Hoyer has been a longtime champion of ensuring quality schools and education in the State of Maryland and throughout the nation. In his first year as the U.S. House Majority Leader, he has helped shepherd through Congress the largest increase in federally-backed financial aid in 60 years and has worked to increase funding for education priorities including No Child Left Behind, Head Start, higher education, and teaching children with disabilities.

Rep. Hoyer is also the author of the Full-Service Community Schools Act to build upon the success of Maryland's Judith P. Hoyer Early Child Care and Family Education Centers, or "Judy Centers." Judy Centers are early education sites providing comprehensive educational and social services for at-risk students, families, and communities. Ten million dollars in federal funding has been appropriated this year to develop the Full-Service Community Schools initiative.

"Congressman Hoyer truly understands the importance of an equal and excellent education," said Dr. Nancy Grasmick, State Superintendent of Schools. "It is his pioneering policies, his powerful advocacy, and his tremendous dedication to doing the right thing that make Congressman Hoyer a true friend of education."

"This year's honorees demonstrate tremendous dedication to improving or enhancing opportunities for Marylanders," said Mary McDowell, President and CEO of CitiFinancial. "The future is much brighter for Maryland's children because of the vision, leadership, and caring provided by those we honor today."

The 2007 honorees include: Individual: Charles I. Ecker; Government: Congressman Steny H. Hoyer; Organization Verizon Foundation; and, Business/Industry: McDonald's Family of Greater Baltimore.

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