

Charlotte County Principal, School Board Member Testify at Hearing on No Child Left Behind

(September 10, 2007)

(Washington, D.C.) - Kathleen Rooker, the Principal of Neil Armstrong Elementary, and Andrea Messina, a member of the Charlotte County School Board and commissioner for the Aspen Institute each gave testimony at a hearing in Washington on the No Child Left Behind Act today. Both recently met with Congressman Tim Mahoney and Chairman of the Education and Labor Committee George Miller at a meeting in Charlotte County to discuss No Child Left Behind.

"With the reauthorization of No Child Left Behind approaching, it is critical that our local schools have a voice in the debate. I was proud to bring Chairman Miller to Charlotte County to meet face to face with those responsible for our children's education and I commend Principal Rooker and School Board Member Messina for their testimony today. Arbitrary standards and lack of funding under No Child Left Behind have unfairly punished many outstanding schools. It is counterproductive that a school can be labeled as succeeding under one system and failing under another. It's time to fix the system so that our teachers can teach to the child not the test, and our students get the tools they need to reach their full potential," said Congressman Tim Mahoney.

"Schools believe and value effective and comprehensive accountability systems. But an accountability system that is just keeping a single score and makes loser out of schools, is not an accountability system that gives much information about classroom teaching and learning or about teaching practices and curriculum. It is a system that ignores the indicators of a viable school curriculum," said Kathleen Rooker, Principal of Neil Armstrong Elementary in her testimony. Full transcript is available at <http://edlabor.house.gov/>

Most programs of federal aid to K-12 education are authorized by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). The ESEA was most recently amended and reauthorized by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (signed into law on January 8, 2002).

The No Child Left Behind Act was intended as a national accountability law and a means of holding states, school districts and schools more accountable for improving the academic performance of each student regardless of economic status, race, ethnicity, proficiency in English or disability. However, the funding appropriated over the last five years has been substantially below the amount of funding authorized in the NCLB Act, making it difficult for many schools to meet federal standards. No Child Left Behind is expected to come before Congress for reauthorization this fall.

-###-