



Congressman Tim Bishop

FIRST DISTRICT -- NEW YORK

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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BISHOP SEEKS TO FULLY FUND LONG ISLAND SCHOOLS

Launches Effort to Bring Relief to Long Island School Districts

Washington, DC: As Congress prepares to leave Washington without addressing the burdens unfunded federal education mandates place on local taxpayers, Congressman Bishop launched an effort to bring tax relief to local school districts by forcing a vote on the Educational Opportunity for the 21st Century Act (HR 4473). Once the Bishop Discharge Petition secures the required 218 signatures, this important legislation will be brought to the floor of the House for the consideration it deserves.

Congressman Bishop recently released a report from the non-partisan Congressional Research Service showing that failure to fully fund the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) cost local school districts in New York's 1st Congressional District an additional \$4,007,800 this year alone. This same report indicates that failure to meet the required federal investment in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is responsible for a \$23,947,000 shortfall. Shortchanging our communities of the federal funding promised to meet our education commitment forces local school districts to pass the buck to Long Island taxpayers.

Bishop has long supported the Educational Opportunity for the 21st Century Act, a bill that would provide \$14 billion more than President Bush's fiscal year 2005 education budget. This bill would provide \$9.5 billion to fully fund NCLB, \$12.3 billion towards the federal IDEA commitment, \$2 billion to fully fund after-school centers, and increases the maximum Pell Grant from \$4050 to \$4500. This legislation is paid for by reducing the average tax cuts for wealthy individuals earning more than \$1,000,000.

"Passing the cost of our unfunded education commitments to local taxpayers in the form of even higher property taxes may be acceptable to the leadership of this Congress, but it is certainly not acceptable to me," Bishop stated. "It is high-time that the federal government live up to its end of the bargain and provide our children with the world-class education they deserve."

"I launched today's Discharge Petition on HR 4473 because I believe the American people should have an opportunity to hold Congress to task for its failure to adequately support our commitments to education." Bishop further stated that "at a time when budgetary shortfalls have forced state governments to raise the cost of college tuition, I wholeheartedly support the bill's emphasis on keeping college affordable by increasing Pell Grants to keep pace with inflation."

The 10 most underfunded schools in the District are: William Floyd (\$3,304,400), Sachem (\$2,912,000), Middle Country (\$2,582,400), Longwood (\$2,524,000), Patchogue (\$2,040,800), Smithtown (\$1,883,300), Riverhead (\$1,507,500), Three Village (\$1,482,000), South Country (\$1,435,400), Kings Park (\$895,000).

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