

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

IMPROVING RESULTS FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES ACT

HON. MICHAEL N. CASTLE

OF DELAWARE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 19, 2003

Mr. CASTLE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Improving Education Results for Children with Disabilities Act, which reauthorizes special education programs in our nation's schools. This legislation improves the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act to ensure that children with special needs receive the high-quality education they deserve. I would like to thank the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER), the chairman of the Committee on Education and the Workforce, for his assistance in bringing this bill to this point.

For too many years, children with disabilities were denied access to public education. However, with the passage of the Education of All Handicapped Children Act in 1975, the doors of educational opportunity were opened. Today, more than ever, students with disabilities have an opportunity to accomplish their goals. According to the Department of Education, about 6.6 million students currently participate in these programs across the nation. Of those, almost 50 percent of students with disabilities spend 80 percent or more of their day in the regular education classroom. In addition, graduation rates for students with disabilities with a standard diploma are at an all-time high, while drop-out rates continue to fall.

Despite IDEA's many success stories, there is room for improvement in serving children with disabilities. These children are still among those at the greatest risk of being left behind. Now more than ever, we must make sure that children with disabilities are given access to an education that maximizes their unique abilities and provides them with tools for later successful, productive lives. We must continue to be vigilant in our efforts towards improving the quality of education of all children, including children with disabilities. We must shift from the current focus on compliance with bureaucratic rules to ensuring that children with disabilities are making progress and achieving to high expectations so that no child is left behind.

The Improving Education Results for Children with Disabilities Act aims to improve current law by focusing on improved education results, reducing the paperwork burden for special education teachers, and addressing the problem of over identification of minority students as disabled. In addition, this bill seeks to reduce litigation, and reform special education finance and funding.

One of the great benefits of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) is that we have raised expectations and will hold school districts accountable for the annual progress of all their students, including students with disabilities. Although we have made great progress in including students with disabilities in the regular

classroom, we now must make equally great progress in ensuring that they receive a quality education in the regular classroom. We must carefully align the IDEA with NCLB to ensure that students with disabilities are included in the accountability systems of States and school districts.

This bill will help reduce the paperwork burden so that school districts are able to retain and recruit highly qualified special education teachers. The excessive amount of paperwork currently inherent in special education continues to overwhelm and burden teachers, robbing them of time to educate their students. Teachers must have the ability to spend more time in the classroom rather than spending endless hours filling out forms that do not lead to a better education for students.

Furthermore, we are committed to implementing reforms that would reduce the number of students that are misidentified or over represented in special education programs. Minorities are often significantly over represented in special education programs. In fact, African Americans are nearly three times more likely to be labeled as mentally retarded, and almost twice as likely to be labeled emotionally disturbed. Current methods of identifying children with disabilities lack validity or reliability. As a result, thousands of children are inappropriately identified every year, while many others are not identified early enough or at all.

This bill seeks to reduce litigation and restore trust between parents and school districts. All too often miscommunication damages this relationship and results in a proliferation of litigation. We are committed to implementing reforms that provide ample opportunities for positive interaction before a problem becomes serious. We are also committed to ensure that parents are actively involved in their child's education experience. This bill will give parents greater access to be involved in making decisions about their child's education.

Finally, we are very proud of our record in securing the largest funding increases for IDEA over the past 7 years. Since 1995, Congress has nearly tripled federal spending for special education. This bill continues to lead the way in increasing funds for IDEA by creating a path to attain full funding of the federal government's 40 percent goal within 7 years.

We remain committed to build upon reforms already implemented and must keep these challenges in mind as we reauthorize IDEA. I look forward to working with the member of the Committee, other Members of Congress, and stakeholders as we work to craft legislation that will build upon and improve previous reforms and continue to ensure that children with disabilities receive a quality education. I urge my colleagues to join me and the other original co-sponsors in support of the Improving Education Results for Children with Disabilities Act.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO DON WILCOX

HON. SCOTT McINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 19, 2003

Mr. McINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Don Wilcox for his outstanding achievements as the president of the Norwood Roping Club of Colorado. Through his leadership, the Roping Club has accomplished much, and it is my distinct honor to stand and recognize Don before this body of Congress and this nation.

The Norwood Roping Club hosts their own rodeo every year and, because of Don and his community's efforts, the size of that rodeo has nearly doubled over the last year. Don aggressively set out to increase the number of sponsors, giving Norwood's rodeo the distinction of having the largest prize money pot in the state. Don's work caught the attention of the Colorado Pro-Rodeo Association, which presented the Norwood club with two awards. Furthermore, the Norwood rodeo now attracts some of the best cowboys in the state. On top of this extraordinary record of success, this year's rodeo will be sanctioned by rodeo associations in New Mexico and Arizona, bringing cowboys from three states to Norwood for the competition. Despite his important role in the advancement of Norwood's rodeo, Don remains a humble man, giving much of the credit to the community.

Mr. Speaker, it is a great privilege to recognize Don Wilcox and congratulate him on his accomplishments. His dedication to preserving our Western heritage through his club's rodeo is a credit to himself, the Norwood Roping Club, and the community of Norwood. Don possesses a cowboy's determined spirit, and it is truly an honor to acknowledge his success before this body of Congress and this nation. Keep on riding, Don.

HONORING DEE AND BEN GETTLER AS THEY ARE HONORED BY THE OHIO CANCER RESEARCH ASSOCIATES

HON. ROB PORTMAN

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 19, 2003

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Dee and Ben Gettler, good friends and distinguished constituents, who will be honored for their community service and commitment to cancer research on April 10, 2003, by the Ohio Cancer Research Associates. Dee and Ben's devotion to community and national organizations is legion.

Dee was born in Troy, New York, and graduated from the College of William and Mary. She has served Cincinnati as Chairman of the Women's Committee for the Cincinnati Ballet; President of the Umbrella Board and the

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