

Washington, D.C. - U.S. Rep. David Price (D-NC) re-introduced legislation today to address one of the biggest challenges facing school districts throughout the country – the retention of qualified public school teachers. This legislation is part of Price's ongoing efforts to improve the quality of public education throughout the nation by bringing teachers of the highest caliber into the profession and then keeping them in the classroom.

"Teacher retention is just as important a goal – and perhaps a more difficult challenge – as teacher recruitment," Rep. Price said. "We can provide federal scholarships to encourage individuals to go into teaching. But we need to combine that financial encouragement with preparation and enrichment programs to make it easier and more rewarding for teachers to stay in the profession and make teaching their career."

Approximately one-third of teachers leave the profession within five years of being hired, according to the non-partisan Congressional Research Service (CRS). In some schools, the five-year attrition rate reaches 50 percent. This comes at a time when schools are hard-pressed to recruit enough teachers to fill the demand of the coming years. The National Education Association recently released an assessment revealing that American schools would need to hire an additional 2 million teachers over the next decade to keep pace with student growth.

Price's bill, the Keep Teachers Teaching Act, would help schools cope with these pressures by providing federal grants directly to states or school districts to develop innovative teacher retention programs. The Department of Education would identify the most promising teacher retention approaches, drawing from fully-operational programs as well as those in the pilot test phase, and share information about the success of the various approaches to states and school districts around the country.

"This problem won't be solved by a cookie-cutter approach mandated by the federal government from above," Price said. "Federal support, however, can be a useful tool in promoting the most innovative and effective ideas at the state and local level. My legislation seeks to identify and support the best programs, while encouraging other states to draw upon their counterparts' experience."

Effective programs to address this problem are already at work in school districts around the country, and many more innovative programs could be advanced if the right kind of resources

PRICE INTRODUCES TEACHER RETENTION BILL

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were available. Price highlighted the [Kenan Fellows Program](#) , administered by North Carolina State University, as an example of a model program that is already working and could be replicated in other states. Kenan Fellows are public school teachers who partner with scientists and university faculty for two years to develop innovative math, science and technology curricula for use in classrooms all across North Carolina.

Price has been a leader in Congress on legislation to address the impending teacher shortage. He has been working for years to build on North Carolina's success at recruiting qualified teachers through the Teaching Fellows program by proposing legislation to expand access to similar programs throughout the country.

Last year, Price lauded passage of legislation to reauthorize federal higher education programs and help college students who want to become teachers. The bill included a provision, based on Price's legislation, that would establish a new Teacher Quality Partnership grant program to help develop a high-quality teaching workforce for America's public schools. Under the legislation, education partnerships could use the grants for scholarships and professional development activities to help graduate and develop top notch teachers.

Price has introduced his teacher retention legislation as the House Committee on Education and Labor prepares to draft the upcoming reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (also known as No Child Left Behind). Last year, similar legislation introduced by Price was included in the Committee's draft reauthorization, but the larger bill was not introduced before the end of the 110th Congress. In May 2007, Price testified before the committee on his ideas for teacher recruitment and retention.

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