

Washington, D.C. - U.S. Rep. David Price (D-NC) today applauded the House for overwhelmingly supporting a bill providing major investments in health care and education for Americans. The House passed the final Labor, Health and Education Appropriations bill (H.R. 3043) tonight by a vote of 274 to 141. Price also urged the President to put aside partisanship and sign the bill into law.

"Congress's funding bills are a reflection of our priorities as a nation," Price said. "This bill demonstrates that we are a country that invests in our children and in the well being of our people. This bill will strengthen our nation now and in the future."

The legislation provides significant support to community health centers, on which 1.2 million medically-underserved Americans rely for their health care. The bill strengthens America's research capacity by issuing nearly 1,400 more life-saving medical research grants than the President requested. It strengthens education by providing funds for the training and development of thousands of teachers and increasing college aid through Pell Grants. And in order to meet local goals for No Child Left Behind, the legislation boosts funding for after school programs, classroom technology, and Title I grants that help low-income kids.

In other areas the bill restores cuts in the President's budget to vital job training programs across the country. And as the temperatures begin to drop, Price said the timing couldn't be better to pass this bill, which restores the President's cuts to a program that helps low-income and elderly families pay their home heating bills.

The Senate passed the measure yesterday. After House passage, the bill will now be sent to the President for his signature. The President has threatened to veto the bill because it does not match his original request, which would cut funding for many of the priorities outlined above.

"The President hasn't quite gotten the message that it's a new day in Washington that calls for more than digging in with failed policies and issuing veto threats," Price said. "The President and Congress need to cooperate, and to ensure that we deliver what the American people expect of their government, including better performing schools and access to health care for the poor and uninsured."

The bill also provides funding for a number of projects in the 4th Congressional District, which Congressman Price requested as a member of the Appropriations Committee. These include:

\$300,000 for a Wake County mental health facility that will provide care to the indigent and uninsured. Additional capacity is needed to compensate for the beds that will be lost when Dorothea Dix Hospital closes in 2008.

\$170,000 to support NC Central's Saturday Academy, which provides supplemental academic support and social enrichment to 400 K-10 students at underperforming schools in Durham.

\$200,000 to renovate the Lincoln Community Health Center in Durham, which provides accessible, affordable outpatient health care services to the medically underserved.

\$175,000 for the statewide expansion of the North Carolina Symphony's K-12 music education program. This funding will bring the program's musical and artistic residency activities to elementary and secondary students in underserved communities through a partnership with community colleges.

\$130,000 to improve assistance programs for family caregivers through the Durham-Chapel Hill Jewish Federation Caregiver Project.

###