

**Washington, D.C.** - U.S. Rep. David Price (D-NC) today called on his colleagues to address the impending teacher shortage by passing robust recruitment and retention programs.

Price testified before the House Education and Labor Committee, which is drafting legislation to reauthorize the major federal elementary and secondary education program known as No Child Left Behind. He warned the committee that local school districts will need to hire an estimated 2.5 million teachers over the next ten years in order to keep pace with growing demand.

Price said any legislation to address the impending teacher shortage must combine federal scholarships with preparation and enrichment programs to fully support teachers as they enter the classroom. The ten-term congressman has authored a bill (H.R. 1828) which would encourage states across the country to replicate the successful North Carolina Teaching Fellows Program. That program provides scholarships and support services to prospective teachers in exchange for their pledge to work in the public school system after graduation. Price said that reciprocal obligation and community service are essential to the success of Teaching Fellows.

Price also described legislation he is working on to help local districts retain teachers. His bill would provide federal grants directly to states or school districts to develop innovative teacher retention programs, such as NC State's Kenan Fellows program.

Below are his remarks as prepared.

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"I thank the distinguished Chairman and Ranking Member for giving me the opportunity to testify before the Committee today about the reauthorization of the No Child Left Behind Act. In particular, I want to highlight the law's teacher recruitment and retention provisions.

"In order to keep pace with anticipated teacher retirements and the growing student population,

local school districts will need to hire an estimated 2.5 million teachers over the next ten years! And not just any warm body will do. Under the No Child Left Behind Act, every teacher was supposed to have been "highly-qualified" by the end of the 2005-2006 school year, a goal that has not yet been achieved. In order to meet these challenges, we must embark on an unprecedented teacher recruitment and retention effort.

"Chairman Miller has introduced comprehensive legislation, the Teacher Excellence for All Children Act (H.R. 2204), which seeks to elevate the teaching profession, increase the supply of new teachers, and recognize the effectiveness of veteran teachers. The TEACH Act would improve the recruitment, preparation, and retention of excellent teachers through peer mentoring programs, financial incentives, and the development of student data tracking systems.

"In related action, the House recently approved Rep. Gordon's 10,000 Teachers, 10 Million Minds Science and Math Scholarship Act (H.R. 362), which would provide scholarships for college students in STEM fields who commit to teaching after graduation. That bill is a critical step for recruiting math and science teachers, which are in particularly short supply.

"The experience of my state shows, however, that we must go further if we want individuals to make teaching their career. It is not enough to simply dispense scholarships. We must combine federal scholarships with preparation and enrichment programs to socialize students into the teaching profession and to mentor and support them as they enter the classroom.

"In 1986, the North Carolina General Assembly established the Teaching Fellows program, which currently produces 500 highly qualified and enthusiastic new teachers each year. I believe it offers a model for national emulation, and that is why I reintroduced the Teaching Fellows Act as H.R. 1828 early in the current Congress.

The Teaching Fellows Act would establish two tracks for recruiting new teachers. First, it would offer scholarships to students graduating from high school or in their sophomore year of college, when they would perhaps be better prepared to make a mature choice about committing to a teaching career.

"Second, through partnerships with community colleges, the bill would offer fellowships to

community college students, particularly those being trained as teaching assistants, to go on and obtain a bachelor's degree and full teaching certification. Students attending community colleges are often deeply rooted in their local communities, including rural and inner-city areas where the need for well qualified teachers is the greatest. Identifying and training a cadre of "homegrown" teachers is a promising strategy for meeting our most pressing teacher recruitment challenges.

"These programs do not merely throw money at individual students but promote, through rich extracurricular programs, esprit de corps and collaborative learning. They strengthen professional identity and provide a support system as students first enter the classroom as teachers. Students would participate in various community and school-based internships and experiences that go well beyond normal teacher preparation. These enrichment programs, which would aim to socialize a young teacher into the profession, could feature a variety of components ranging from school system orientations and educational seminars to Outward Bound programs and international travel.

"In exchange, scholarship recipients would be required to teach in a public school for a minimum period of time equivalent to the length of their scholarship plus one year. The idea of reciprocal obligation and community service are essential to the success of these programs.

"In the 108th Congress, I was pleased that the bipartisan Committee leadership worked with me and former Congressman Cass Ballenger to enhance the teacher recruitment provisions of the Ready to Teach Act in accordance with the Teaching Fellows Act. Those provisions were again included in the comprehensive higher education legislation considered by the House in 2006. It is not of great concern to me whether a Teaching Fellows-type program is made part of a higher education or an elementary and secondary education authorization. But I urge you to consider it as an approach to teacher recruitment of proven worth.

"Now let me turn to teacher retention – a challenge that equals or excels the challenge of recruitment. According to the Congressional Research Service, approximately one-third of teachers leave the profession within five years of being hired because of poor working conditions, low pay, low morale, lack of a pathway for professional advancement, or other reasons. In some schools, the five-year attrition rate reaches 50 percent.

"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

were available. The Kenan Fellows Program, administered by North Carolina State University, is 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.

"I am drafting legislation modeled on the Advanced Technological Education program at the National Science Foundation, which was established in the early 1990's through legislation I authored. The ATE program provides grants to community colleges to develop innovative technological education curricula and teaching methods that can be disseminated to other community colleges around the country. Like the ATE program, the teacher retention legislation I will be introducing would provide federal grants directly to states or school districts to develop innovative teacher retention programs. The Department of Education would be charged with identifying the most promising teacher retention approaches, including those already working and those developed through the pilots, and disseminating information about those approaches to states and school districts around the country. Innovation at the state and local level is the key to solving the teacher retention issue, and I believe federal support can help leverage the unleashing of the existing innovative potential.

"I commend Chairman Miller for introducing the TEACH Act, which takes a comprehensive approach to solving the teacher recruitment and retention problem. My retention proposal would complement that approach by piloting and identifying innovative retention strategies. I ask you to give it serious consideration as you work to reauthorize the No Child Left Behind Act.

"Again, I thank the Committee for inviting me here today, and I look forward to working with members from both sides of the aisle to encourage our best and brightest to enter and remain in the field of teaching."

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