

AAG Washington Monitor

The Ongoing NCLB Reauthorization Process

Picking up on the call to action issued in Doug Richardson's column this month, the following is a more detailed synopsis of where the NCLB legislative reauthorization process stands and who you can reach out to in an effort to have the most effect on behalf of geography education.

The House Committee on Education and Labor, under the leadership of Chairman George Miller (D-CA), and the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee, chaired by Sen. Ted Kennedy (D-MA), have convened a series of ongoing hearings this year focused on different aspects of the ESEA and what has and has not been working since NCLB went into effect in 2002. Both Chairmen have stated a goal of releasing reauthorization proposals by August 3 (the last Congressional working day before the month-long Summer District Work Period).

While reauthorization is a priority for the Committees and the Democratic Leadership in both Houses of Congress, there is still disagreement in Washington as to whether the political will exists to craft a compromise bill that the White House will agree to by year's end. It does seem quite clear that if an agreement cannot be reached before the end of the year, a reauthorization is unlikely until 2009 – the polarization of an election year will make action nearly impossible in 2008.

An existing factor that could dampen chances for action this year is the early start to the presidential campaign. With the candidates already in midseason form, several of the leading Democrats in the field have issued scathing critiques of NCLB and promised to push for significant reform. If these individuals, including Senators Hillary Clinton (D-NY), Barack Obama (D-IL), Chris Dodd (D-CT), and former Senator John Edwards (D-NC), push for changes to the law that the White House is unwilling to agree to, the reauthorization could be forestalled until a new president is inaugurated in January 2009. This would also mean a

new Congress would be in place, with the potential for significant changes to Committee rosters.

That having been said, this is the most important year for those interested in the ESEA since No Child was passed in 2001, and even if a bill is not in place by the end of the year, any proposals put forward in 2007 would likely have a significant effect on a 2009 reauthorization. Your input to and education of Congress on this matter would be a valuable addition to the debate at this time, regardless of whether a reauthorization of NCLB occurs during this year, or continues to a future year.

Who You Should Contact

While we urge you to contact all of your Senators and Representatives about this important topic, the following members serve on the Congressional Committees with jurisdiction over NCLB. If you are from the same state as one of these individuals or have a personal tie to their office, please consider contacting them directly:

Senators – Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, & Pensions

- Lisa Murkowski (R-AK)
- Wayne Allard (R-CO)
- Christopher Dodd (D-CT)
- Johnny Isakson (R-GA)
- Barack Obama (D-IL)
- Tom Harkin (D-IA)
- Pat Roberts (R-KS)
- Barbara A. Mikulski (D-MD)
- Edward Kennedy, Chairman (D-MA)
- Judd Gregg (R-NH)
- Jeff Bingaman (D-NM)
- Hillary Rodham Clinton (D-NY)
- Richard Burr (R-NC)
- Sherrod Brown (D-OH)
- Tom Coburn, M.D. (R-OK)
- Jack Reed (D-RI)
- Lamar Alexander (R-TN)
- Orrin G. Hatch (R-UT)
- Bernard Sanders (I-VT)
- Patty Murray (D-WA)
- Michael B. Enzi, Ranking Member (R-WY)

Representatives – House Committee on Education & Labor

- Raúl M. Grijalva (D-AZ)
- Susan A. Davis (D-CA)
- Howard P. "Buck" McKeon, Ranking Member (R-CA)
- George Miller, Chairman (D-CA)
- Linda T. Sánchez (D-CA)
- Lynn C. Woolsey (D-CA)
- Joe Courtney (D-CT)
- Michael N. Castle (R-DE)
- Ric Keller (R-FL)
- Tom Price (R-GA)
- Mazie Hirono (D-HI)
- Judy Biggert (R-IL)
- Danny K. Davis (D-IL)
- Phil Hare (D-IL)
- Mark E. Souder (R-IN)
- Dave Loebsack (D-IA)
- John Yarmuth (D-KY)
- Charles W. Boustany, Jr. (R-LA)
- John Sarbanes (D-MD)
- John F. Tierney (D-MA)
- Vernon J. Ehlers (R-MI)
- Peter Hoekstra (R-MI)
- Dale E. Kildee (D-MI)
- Timothy Walberg (R-MI)
- John Kline (R-MN)
- Carol Shea-Porter (D-NH)
- Robert E. Andrews (D-NJ)
- Rush D. Holt (D-NJ)
- Donald M. Payne (D-NJ)
- Timothy H. Bishop (D-NY)
- Yvette Clarke (D-NY)
- John R. "Randy" Kuhl, Jr. (R-NY)
- Carolyn McCarthy (D-NY)
- Dean Heller (R-NV)
- Virginia Foxx (R-NC)
- Dennis J. Kucinich (D-OH)
- David Wu (D-OR)
- Jason Altmire (D-PA)
- Todd Russell Platts (R-PA)
- Joe Sestak (D-PA)
- Luis G. Fortuño (R-PR)
- Joe Wilson (R-SC)
- David Davis (R-TN)
- Rubén Hinojosa (D-TX)
- Kenny Marchant (R-TX)
- Rob Bishop (R-UT)
- Robert C. Scott (D-VA)

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2007 AAG IGIF Awards and Grants

The AAG International Geographic Fund Committee (IGIF) announced its selections for student travel awards and student travel grant competitions at the AAG Annual Meeting in San Francisco.

The AAG IGIF Student Travel Grants are available to full-time undergraduate or graduate students specializing in spatial analysis or GIS. Awardees are recognized for their academic record as well as their clarity of focus in career goals.

This year, travel grants of \$500 each were given to **Debarhana Ghosh** (University of Minnesota), **Jennifer Miller** (University of Texas at Austin), **Hunter Barcello** (University of Idaho), **Li Zhe** (Clark University), **Sarah McLane** (University of South Carolina), and **Anne Trainor** (University of North Carolina).

The AAG International Geographic Fund Committee also recognizes outstanding student papers in any area of spatial

analysis or geographic information science or systems. To be eligible, the paper must be presented at a national or international conference or a specialized meeting sponsored by a professional organization.

Stephanie Deitrick, a graduate student in the Department of Geography at Arizona State University, was presented with the 2007 AAG-IGIF Student Paper Award for "The Influence of Uncertainty Visualization on Decision Making: An Empirical Evaluation." She presented the paper at the 12th International Symposium on Spatial Data Handling in Vienna, Austria in July 2006. The honor carries an award in the amount of \$200.

The AAG provides small grants to support outstanding graduate level research proposed by a student in any area of spatial analysis or geographic information science or systems. This award is financially supported by the AAG-IGIF

Fund. Awardees are recognized for the originality, relevance, and quality of their proposed research project.

The 2007 AAG-IGIF Graduate Research Award went to **Jennifer Miller**, a doctoral graduate student in the Department of Geography and the Environment at the University of Texas at Austin. Her proposal for research is entitled, "Modeling, Movement, and Management of Antelope in the Okavango Delta, Botswana: preliminary work in GPS collar bias and the integration of temporal data into GIS."

The AAG International Geographic Fund Committee has been generously supported by Laura and Jack Dangermond and the Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI). Their financial support has helped to establish an endowment for this program.

Full details of the program are available at www.aag.org/Grantsawards/IGIF.cfm. ■

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- Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R-WA)
- Thomas E. Petri (R-WI)

All Senators can be reached at the following address:

The Honorable <Full Name>
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

All Representatives use this address:

The Honorable <Full Name>
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Other Key Geography Education Initiatives

In addition to possible reauthorization of NCLB legislation this year, two other bills have also been introduced in Congress that would also serve to promote geography education. The Teaching Geography is Fundamental Act (S. 727 and H.R. 1228) has been introduced in both houses of congress, thanks largely to the supportive work of the National Geographic Society. The AAG also supports these bills and is heartened

that numerous sponsors have signed on in each House of Congress. Additional information on possible action on these bills will be provided as it becomes available.

Geographer Serving as Key House Staffer

In February, geographer Daniel P. Beard was sworn in as Chief Administrative Officer of the U.S. House of Representatives. As CAO, Beard was appointed by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) and is charged with providing the operations infrastructure and support necessary to the 435 Members of the House. His staff works behind the scenes installing furniture, laying fiber optic cable, managing employee payroll and benefits, child care, and parking, as well as ensuring easy access to meals for all Members of Congress, staff, and visitors to the House. His office also oversees the House recording studio. Separately, Beard has been tapped by Pelosi to manage her "Green the Capitol" environmental initiative.

Prior to holding his current position, Beard served as a senior advisor for the consulting firm Booz Allen Hamilton, Inc. Previously he spent 10 years on the staff of the House Appropriations and Natural Resources Committee. His three decades of experience in policy affairs and management issues also include positions with the Senate, White House, Interior Department, and the Library of Congress.

Beard was an ideal choice to lead the "Green the Capitol" initiative in part because of his extensive background in managing environmental issues. As Commissioner of the Bureau of Reclamation in the Interior Department, he guided the agency on a more environmentally responsible path by promoting water conservation among agricultural and urban water users. He also served as Chief Operating Officer and Senior Vice President for Public Policy at the National Audubon Society.

Beard earned his Master's degree and PhD from the University of Washington.

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