

AAG Newsletter
of the
Association of American
Geographers

Douglas Richardson, Publisher
and Managing Editor
Jim Ketchum, Editor
AAG Voice 202-234-1450
AAG Fax 202-234-2744
newsletter@aag.org
www.aag.org

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Secretaries of State Support AAG Geography Education Resolution

Former U.S. Secretaries of State George P. Shultz, James A. Baker III, and Madeleine K. Albright have endorsed an AAG resolution calling on Congress to "include authorizations and appropriations for geography education consistent with other core academic subjects for K-12, as part of a reauthorized Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)." The resolution issued by the Association of American Geographers



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(AAG) also supports geography programs such as the Teaching Geography is Fundamental Act, and urges the Obama Administration to include geography education as part of its proposals for improving STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) education.

A bipartisan group of 12 current governors, other key individuals, and major national organizations and corporations have also signed onto the resolution. The supporting governors are: Haley Barbour (R-Mississippi); Martin O'Malley (D-Maryland); Rick Scott (R-Florida); Pat Quinn (D-Illinois); Sam Brownback (R-Kansas); Mark Dayton (D-Minnesota); Mary Fallin (R-Oklahoma); Peter Shumlin (D-Vermont); Gary Herbert (R-Utah); Earl Ray Tomblin (D-West Virginia); Paul LePage (R-Maine); and Lincoln Chafee (I-Rhode Island).

In endorsing the document, Secretary Baker stated, "During my time as Secretary of State, I witnessed firsthand how important it was that Americans understood geography and the world around them. Since then, as countries have become even more interconnected, that need has grown. As a result, I support the efforts by the AAG to promote geography education in our schools, and I encourage the White House and Congress to do the same."

Secretary Albright asserted, "Geography played a leading role in nearly every policy decision I was involved in as Secretary of State. Young Americans with an understanding of peoples, places, and cultures have a clear advantage in today's rapidly-changing global economy and I am encouraged that the AAG is

working with Congress and the Administration to build support for geography education at the K-12 level."

We are delighted to have the support of so many significant individuals and groups as we champion greater federal funding for and attention to geography education. Geography is the only one of the ten core academic subjects identified in the ESEA that does not have a specific funding authorization in



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the national program designed to support its teaching. As Congress works on reauthorizing the ESEA, this oversight must be addressed.

Other endorsers of the AAG Resolution on Geography Education include: the National Association of State Boards of Education; the American Geological Institute; former UN Ambassador and Governor Bill Richardson; the National Council for Science and the Environment; the U.S. Green Building Council; numerous geography-related organizations including NCGE, Esri, NGS, the Coalition of Geospatial Organizations, URISA, GITA, AGS, and GISCI; and many others.

We urge AAG members to express their own views regarding geography education to their Congressional Representatives, both at home in their districts and in Washington, DC. The ESEA is currently being considered by key Congressional committees (see the *Washington Monitor* on page 7 of this *Newsletter* for more information). If you wish to contact your local media regarding the need for geography education, a press release regarding the recent major endorsements of the AAG Resolution is available for downloading from the AAG website. The AAG Resolution Supporting K-12 Geography Education, with a full listing of endorsing organizations and individuals, is available at: www.aag.org/AAGEducationResolution. ■

John Wertman and Doug Richardson
jwertman@aag.org
drichardson@aag.org