

LARSON'S BROADBAND AMENDMENT ACCEPTED ON SCIENCE EDUCATION BILL

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WASHINGTON, D.C.—An amendment offered by U.S. Congressman John B. Larson (CT-01) to H.R. 1858, the National Mathematics and Science Partnerships Act, was accepted today by the full House Committee on Science during the committee's mark-up. Larson's amendment allows the National Science Foundation (NSF) to identify the best methods to provide educators and policy makers with tools for using broadband Internet technology most effectively in the nation's schools. Larson's amendment requires the National Science Foundation to conduct a study—with subsequent yearly updates—that identifies:

- The broadband capacity access to all public elementary and secondary schools and libraries in the United States.
- How broadband capacity access to the Internet to such schools and libraries can be MOST effectively utilized within each school and library.
- The effect that specific or regional circumstances may have on these institutions' ability to acquire broadband capacity access to achieve universal connectivity, which has become a crucial tool in the education process.

Among other things, H.R. 1858, sponsored by Rep. Sherwood Boehlert (NY-23) would:

- Establish awards to institutions of higher education and non-profit organizations (research institutes or professional associations) that have entered into partnerships and businesses to improve K-12 science education.
- Authorize activities for partnerships: recruitment and training of science teachers in-service teacher professional development; educational technology training for teachers; distance learning programs teacher prep and certification for scientists; development of assessment tools for student performance; development of curricular materials for K-12 and undergrad science courses for pre-service teachers; developing math and science enrichment programs for students developing master teachers; providing research opportunities for teachers and students; and bringing scientists into the classroom.
- Establish awards to institutions of higher education and non-profit organizations to provide research opportunities for K-12 science teachers at academic, industry or government labs.
- Establish 4 multidisciplinary centers for research on learning and educational improvement. The goal is to form collaborations among cognitive scientists, education researchers and education practitioners to improve classroom instruction in science and math.
- Establish awards to institutions of higher education and non-profit organizations (research institutes or professional associations) to provide research opportunities related to the science of learning for K-12 science teachers.
- Reestablish the scholarship program first authorized by the Excellence in Mathematics, Science, and Engineering Education Act of 1990. This new version of the program also provides 1 year stipends for holders of math, science and engineering degrees who wish to become certified as K-12 science teachers.

The bill, including Larson's amendment, passed the full Science Committee unanimously today and is expected to reach the House floor sometime in the next several weeks.

