

Education

Early Childhood Education

Comprehensive early childhood education is essential in shaping the way children think, learn, and behave for the rest of their lives. Research shows that quality child care, preschool and afterschool programs impact the physical, cognitive and social development of children. For over forty years, Head Start and a number of other federal programs have successfully provided educational services as well as health, nutrition, and other services to low-income children to prepare them to enter kindergarten

In the state of Connecticut there are over 7,000 children enrolled in Head Start and Early Head Start and 4,500 on waiting lists for child care assistance. Despite the continued need and positive results of programs like Head Start, President Bush's fiscal year 2007 budget provides no new money for Head Start, thereby cutting 19,000 children across the country from the program next year. I will continue to support early childhood programs that lay the foundation for the future success of every child in school.

Information from the Library of Congress:

- Head Start: Background and Issues
- Early Childhood Education: Preschool Participation, Program Efficacy, and Federal Policy Issues
- The Child Care and Development Block Grant: Background and Issues
- Child Care Issues in the 110th Congress

Special Education

I am a strong supporter of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). IDEA is a fundamental civil rights program that provides funds to states for the education of children with disabilities. However, since 1975, Congress has placed yet another unfunded mandate on local communities. Since IDEA became law, Congress has authorized spending of up to 40% of the cost of the average per pupil expenditure on special education, but has failed to meet that commitment time after time.

On December 3, 2004, President Bush signed the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (P.L. 108-446), a major reauthorization and revision of IDEA into law. The reauthorization, among other things, included specific authorization levels for fiscal year 2007 and a timeline for the federal government to reach full funding by 2011. Unfortunately, the President's budget request for fiscal year 2007 is \$6.3 billion less than the amount authorized under the revised IDEA. The 2007 funding freezes the federal contribution at only 17 percent of the national average per pupil expenditure, still less than half the 40 percent "full funding" federal contribution ceiling allowed by IDEA. That is why I introduced the Full Funding for IDEA Now Act (HR 1107) that would require the federal government to fully fund its share of IDEA now and end its long-standing failure to properly fund special education.

Press Releases

11/19/04 - Larson: Despite Promises, Congress to Again Shortchange Special Education

4/30/03 - Rules Committee Refuses to Allow Larson Amendment Mandating Full Federal Funding for Special Education

4/29/03 - Larson Fights for Amendment to Fully Fund "IDEA"; Special Education Program

2/14/03 - Larson Introduces Legislation to Mandate Full Funding for "IDEA"; Special Education Program

Information from the Library of Congress

- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA): Current Funding Trends
- The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA): Comparison and Analysis of Selected Provisions in H.R. 1350 as Passed by the House and by the Senate, 108th Congress

No Child Left Behind

I supported the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) when it became law in 2001 because it promised to strengthen education in this country by enhancing accountability in our public schools, increasing overall funding for education for disadvantaged students, for science and math education, and for technology programs. For the fifth year in a row, President Bush's budget has failed to provide the funding promised in NCLB. The President's fiscal year

2007 budget falls \$15 billion short of the authorized funding level for NCLB in fiscal year 2007. These shortchanges have shifted the financial burden to our states and towns to make up the difference. That is why I have cosponsored the Keep Our Promise to America's Children and Teachers Act (HR 363) that would allow a state education agency or school district to suspend implementation of NCLB provisions until it is fully funded. I have also cosponsored the No Child Left Behind Reform Act (HR 1506) that would give states more flexibility in measuring student achievement.

On March 1, 2004, I testified before the Connecticut General Assembly's Education Committee about the various failures of this law. [Click here to read the testimony.](#)

Press Releases

5/5/05 - Congressman Larson Speaks Out Against Education Secretary's Ruling on School Reform in Connecticut

Information from the Library of Congress

K-12 Education: Highlights of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (P.L. 107-110)
Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP): Implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act

Title IX

As the father of two daughters, I am a strong supporter of Title IX, which was enacted as part of the Education Amendments of 1972. It prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in federally assisted education programs or activities. [Learn more](#) about my work on Title IX.

Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) Education

The Nation's ability to remain competitive in the future global marketplace is directly tied to the ability of our schools to prepare our children in the areas that will fuel the 21st century: science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). I have long advocated for bridging the digital divide and investing in the STEM areas of education. Teacher excellence is linked to student achievement and that is why I have supported increased funding for the Math

and Science Partnership program at the Department of Education. Math and Science Partnerships provide necessary professional development, which strengthens teachers' ability to effectively teach math and science and strengthens our students' math and science skills.

I am also a cosponsor of the Higher Education Science and Technology Competitiveness Act (HR 226), which would provide incentives for states to establish partnerships in math, science, engineering and technology between community colleges and four-year institutions. The bill would coordinate technical programs at community colleges and four-year institutions to better serve students as well as meet the needs of private industry.

Creating an educated, skilled workforce in the science, technology, engineering and math areas are concepts that have been included in the Democratic Innovation Agenda

Higher Education

The Higher Education Act (HEA) authorizes the federal government's major student aid programs, as well as other significant programs such as those providing aid to special groups of higher education institutions and support services to enable disadvantaged students to complete secondary school and enter and complete college. On March 30, 2006, I voted against HR 609, which reauthorizes the Higher Education Act (HEA), but fails to make college truly more affordable for working families. I supported a Democratic alternative that would have, among other things, cut interest rates in half for borrowers, created a pilot program for year round Pell Grants, and simplified the student loan application process.

The federal Pell Grant program offers need-based scholarships to undergraduate college students. These scholarships, which account for nearly all federal grant assistance to college students, offer valuable support for students and their families who are attempting to contend with rapidly rising tuition costs. The President's Fiscal Year 2007 budget freezes the maximum Pell Grant award at \$4,050, where it has been held since 2003, while the average tuition and fees at a four-year public college have risen \$1,393.

This year, about 1.7 million college graduates will enter the U.S. workforce, each carrying an average of \$16,000 in student loan debt. I have cosponsored the Student Loan Fairness Act (HR 1029), which would allow students and graduates to shop around for the best loan consolidation deal. The bill would also repeal the restriction that prevents individuals from reconsolidating or refinancing their student loans. I am also a cosponsor of the College Loan Assistance Act (HR 1338) that would eliminate loan and origination fees charged to student borrowers and allow students that are locked into high interest rate to consolidate their debt into loans with lower interest rates.

Press Releases

7/11/07 - Rep. Larson Praises Passage of College Cost Reduction Act of 2007

1/17/07 - Larson Votes to Cut Interest Rates on Student Loans

Information from the Library of Congress

Federal Pell Grant Program of the Higher Education Act: Background and Reauthorization
Higher Education Act Reauthorization: A Comparison of Current Law and Major Proposals
Campus-Based Student Financial Aid Programs Under the Higher Education

Helpful Links

House Committee on Education and the Workforce

U.S. Department of Education

Connecticut State Department of Education

Connecticut Institutions of Higher Learning

Federal Student Aid

Connecticut Department of Higher Education Student Financial Aid