

## Improving Education

In order for America to maintain our preeminent role in the world, it is critical that we provide all students with a quality education and ensure that they have the ability to pursue higher education. Due to his commitment to education, Congressman Altmire sought and received a position on the House Committee on Education and Labor. From this position, he has taken a leading role in making college more affordable, improving early childhood education and reforming the No Child Left Behind Act.

### Making College More Affordable

Congressman Altmire played a key role in drafting and passing the College Cost Reduction and Access Act (H.R. 2669). At no new cost to tax payers, this legislation invests \$20 billion in student financial aid which represents the single largest increase in financial aid since the GI bill became law more than 60 years ago. The College Cost Reduction and Access Act was signed into law on September 27, 2007. For Congressman Altmire's statement on this issue, see [Altmire Joins House and Senate Leadership in Sending Historic College Aid Bill to President's Desk].

### Improving Early Childhood Education

Congressman Altmire is an original cosponsor of the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act (H.R. 1429). This legislation expands access to Head Start, strengthens the programs' focus on school readiness, improves Head Start teacher quality, and ensures taxpayer dollars fund only well-run programs. In addition, Congressman Altmire successfully amended the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act to help Head Start programs in rural areas confront the unique challenges that they face. The Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act was signed into law on December 12, 2007. For Congressman Altmire's statement on this issue, see [Altmire Votes to Help Prepare Children for School Success].

### Reforming No Child Left Behind

Congressman Altmire fully supports the goals of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), to ensure that all students can perform math and read at grade level by the 2013 - 2014 school year. However, he believes that the law must be reformed so that it works better for students, parents, teachers, and administrators. On September, 13, 2008, Congressman Altmire held a town hall on NCLB with the chairman of the House Committee on Education and Labor to discuss the upcoming reauthorization of the law with local superintendents, principals, teachers and parents and get their feedback on the challenges that they face in dealing with the realities of NCLB on a daily basis. One way Congressman Altmire has sought to reform NCLB is by authoring the Educational Advisor and Contractor Integrity Act (HR 3718). This legislation combats the conflicts of interest and mismanagement discovered in the Reading First program and prevents the same abuses from occurring in other programs authorized by NCLB. For Congressman Altmire's statement on this issue, see [Altmire Discusses Future of No Child Left Behind Education Law].

### Expanding Access to College

On July 31, 2008, Congress passed the first reauthorization of the Higher Education Act in 10 years and it was subsequently signed into law. The Higher Education Opportunity Act (H.R. 4137) will make college more accessible and affordable by addressing the soaring cost of college and other barriers that have precluded qualified students from going to college. The Higher Education Opportunity Act will encourage colleges to rein in tuition increases, restore integrity and accountability to student loan programs, simplify the federal student loan aid application process and expand college access and affordability. As a member of the House Education and Labor Committee and as a member of the conference committee that worked out the differences between the House and Senate versions of this bill, Congressman Altmire played a key role in shaping this legislation. Four of Congressman Altmire's legislative initiatives were included in the final product, including a program to help lower the cost of textbooks by creating a pilot rental program and the establishment of a partnership between community colleges and employers to develop college courses that include workforce training to ensure that students have the necessary skills to succeed after graduation. For Congressman Altmire's statement on this issue, see [Altmire Initiatives to Lower Textbook Costs, Improve Workforce Development to be Signed into Law].