

Rep. Miller offered the following resolution:

House Resolution No. 108.

A resolution to memorialize the Congress of the United States to take steps to remove the mandate for highly qualified effective teacher status from the No Child Left Behind provisions.

Whereas, The No Child Left Behind Act has had a significant impact on the world of education since it was signed into law on January 8, 2002. Indeed, it has changed the entire focus of our K-12 system and has brought many necessary reforms in teacher accountability and pupil achievement. Nonetheless, as the law approached its five-year anniversary, a bi-partisan commission was created to take a new and balanced look at the act's effectiveness and future; and

Whereas, On February 13, 2007, the Commission on No Child Left Behind issued its final report. The recommendations centered around harnessing the power of standards, accountability, and choices. The commission specifically recommended a number of laudable goals. These included enhancing the effectiveness of teachers and principals, developing model assessments, improving the accuracy of annual yearly progress reports, and providing greater access to pupil choice and supplemental support services. These proposals will undoubtedly go a long way in improving student achievement and progress. One recommendation of the commission, a mandate for highly qualified effective teacher status, is, however, particularly troubling. While the overall goal of having effective educators in all classrooms is necessary and truly commendable, the mechanics of this specific proposal will have a negative effect on the teaching profession and the entire educational environment; and

Whereas, As envisioned, the highly qualified teacher mandate would single out and rank all science, math, and reading teachers based on pupil improvement on standardized tests. The top 75 percent would earn highly qualified status and the remaining 25 percent would, in effect, be classified as being ineffective. They would receive individualized professional development and have three years to improve their students' scores. If they did not meet the mandate, they could no longer teach at a Title I school; and

Whereas, Clearly, measuring and branding teachers almost entirely through the results on standardized tests, at a minimum, ignores the reality that marks each individual classroom. Social and economic conditions, pupil preparedness, class size, and any number of internal and external factors impact learning, and inadequate environments for schooling can challenge even the best of teachers. The proposal would also create disparate horizontal and vertical divisions within the ranks of the teaching profession, and place unnecessary barriers to entering the fields of math, science, and reading education at a time when participation in these fields is critical. As laid out, the highly effective teacher status proposal is ill conceived, unproductive, and truly unjust; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives, That we hereby memorialize the Congress of the United States to take steps to remove the mandate for highly effective teacher status from the No Child Left Behind provisions; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, and the members of the Michigan congressional delegation.