

July 31, 2008

The Honorable George Miller  
Chairman  
Committee on Education and Labor  
U. S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Howard “Buck” McKeon  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Education and Labor  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Edward Kennedy  
Chairman  
Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Michael Enzi  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairmen Miller and Kennedy and Ranking Members McKeon and Enzi:

As the House and Senate consider passage of the conference report on legislation that will reauthorize the Higher Education Act, the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) applauds your efforts to date. Congratulations to you, your colleagues and staff who poured countless hours into this effort.

The 100,000 educators who compose the membership of NCTM also thank you. Since House and Senate HEA bills (H.R. 4137 and S. 1642) were introduced, NCTM has supported many provisions of both, particularly their shared emphasis on providing wider access to higher education and stronger support for teacher preparation. The compromise bill, the Higher Education Opportunity Act, and its revisions of Title II—the portion of the bill that addresses teacher preparation programs—recognizes teacher quality as an essential component in producing student achievement. NCTM unequivocally supports rigorous standards for the preparation of all teachers and efforts to put highly qualified teachers in every classroom and Title II’s inclusion of these ideals.

This bill also builds on other Congressional efforts and acknowledges the critical role strong science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education programs play in ensuring our nation’s competitiveness in the global economy. We appreciate the

elements of the compromise measure that would improve STEM teacher professional development and provide meaningful incentives to encourage students to obtain STEM degrees and pursue STEM-related careers. We are also pleased that the bill encourages diversity in the STEM workforce by increasing the participation of underrepresented groups.

Finally, given the profound impact technology has had on the classroom, NCTM supports efforts to prepare teachers to use technology effectively in the classroom. The compromise bill's Title II, Part B, "Preparing Teachers for Digital Age Learners" awards competitive grants to consortia of public and private entities to prepare teachers to use technology. We are grateful for this new initiative.

While the content of this bill is far reaching and this letter cites only a handful of provisions important to math educators, we appreciate your effort and leadership. The goals of increasing access to higher education, strengthening institutions of higher education, and investing in prospective teachers willing to take on the challenge of teaching warrant prudent and appropriate federal investments.

Thank you again.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "James M. Rubillo". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name and title.

James M. Rubillo  
Executive Director  
National Council of Teachers of Mathematics