

## NYSRA Advocacy Alerts

3/18/07

**Striving Readers is a federal proposal for funding initiatives aimed at Middle School Readers. A summary of the main points of this bill can be found on our webpage under the advocacy link. The International Reading Association is supporting endorsement of this legislation. They are asking you to voice your support, as well. If you require information about how to contact Senator C.Schumer or Senator H. Rodam-Clinton about this legislation please contact NYSRA Advocacy Chairman, Francine Stayter. [fstayter@yahoo.com](mailto:fstayter@yahoo.com)**

3/15/07

*WASHINGTON POST*

### **"Dozens in GOP Turn Against Bush's Prized 'No Child' Act"**

More than 50 GOP members of the House and Senate -- including the House's second-ranking Republican -- will introduce legislation today that could severely undercut No Child Left Behind, by allowing states to opt out of its testing mandates. Some Republicans said that a backlash against the law was inevitable. Many voters in affluent suburban and exurban districts -- GOP strongholds -- think their schools have been adversely affected by the law. Once-innovative public schools have increasingly become captive to federal testing mandates, jettisoning education programs not covered by those tests, siphoning funds from programs for the talented and gifted, and discouraging creativity, critics say. Under Rep. Peter Hoekstra's (R-Mich.) bill, the [Academic Partnerships Lead Us to Success Act \(A-PLUS\)](#), any state could essentially opt out of NCLB after one of two actions. A state could hold a referendum, or two of three elected entities -- the governor, the legislature and the state's highest elected education official -- could decide that the state would no longer abide by the strict rules on testing and the curriculum. The Senate bill is slightly less permissive, but it would allow a state to negotiate a "charter" with the federal government to get away from the law's mandates. In both cases, the states that opt out would still be eligible for federal funding, but those states could exempt any education program but special education from NCLB strictures.

### **Oversight Is Set for Beleaguered U.S. Reading Program**

*The New York Times*

Under attack for improprieties uncovered in its showcase literacy program for low-income children, the Department of Education will convene an outside advisory committee to oversee the program, known as Reading First, Education Secretary Margaret Spellings said Wednesday.

3/12/06

Hearings on the reauthorization of NCLB are beginning this week in Washington. There will be many people giving testimony. Expect that adolescent literacy and teacher education will be hot topics during the reauthorization. Here are some materials that members of Congress will be reading as they make their decisions. One is not yet published, but be on the alert for it because it is predicted to be very influential. Francine

The No Child Left Behind Act: An Overview of Reauthorization Issues for the 110th Congress

<http://www.opencrs.com/document/RL33749/>

The Congressional Research Service is think tank that provides research reports to Congress. Tax dollars support this service with almost \$100 million per year. The reports are not readily available to the public, but this one is made available through the Center for Democracy & Technology. This is what members of Congress will be reading prior to voting on reauthorization.

Report of the Commission on No Child Left Behind. [www.nclbcommission.org](http://www.nclbcommission.org) This bipartisan and privately funded commission was created in February 2006 and is housed at the Aspen Institute. This report is likely to be highly influential with Congress and state education departments. The commission carved out a broad, policy-oriented agenda: closing achievement gaps, improving institution, and recruiting and retaining a highly qualified teaching force, and it held five hearings across the country over 2006, and sought wide public comment and recommendations.

Watch for:

Revisiting the Academic Proficiency of Prospective Teachers by Drew Gitomer of Educational Testing Service. To be released Spring 2007. Teacher preparation is a hot button in NCLB reauthorization. The recent structural changes in NYSED for a P-16 division parallel this. This study will be a follow-up study The Academic Quality of Prospective Teachers (Gitomer, Latham & Ziomek, 1999), the first large-scale analysis of the SAT and ACT scores of those who passed teacher licensure tests. It found a great disparity between those who qualified for licenses in specific content areas vs. in elementary, special, and physical education. Elementary Ed candidates had much lower math and verbal scores than “all college graduates” but SAT scores for teachers who passed content-area licensing tests were generally higher than for “all college graduates.” The new, about-to-be released study will indicate whether observable changes in the academic quality of prospective teachers have occurred in light of teacher quality policy initiatives, e.g., Title II/HEA, NCLB, alternate route programs, and increased admissions requirements to teacher education programs.