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**Education Committee**

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**SSJM 8011**

**Brief Description:** Petitioning Congress to raise funding levels of the No Child Left Behind Act.

**Sponsors:** Senate Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education (originally sponsored by Senators McAuliffe, Clements, Rasmussen, Eide, Oemig, Sheldon, Shin, Kline and Tom; by request of Superintendent of Public Instruction).

**Brief Summary of Substitute Bill**

- Asks Congress to fully fund the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 without reducing expenditures for other education programs and to make improvements to address various issues raised.

**Hearing Date:** 3/16/07

**Staff:** Barbara McLain (786-7383).

**Background:**

Congress authorized the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) in 2001. Under the NCLB, states must assess student performance against state standards in reading/language arts and mathematics in each of grades 3 through 8 and one high school grade. Beginning in 2007-08, science must be assessed in at least one grade in elementary, middle, and high school. All students must be assessed.

States must also set and report annual goals for the percent of students meeting the state standard on the assessments, with the goal that all students meet the standard by 2014. Goals must be set for subgroups of students based on race, ethnicity, English language proficiency, disability status, and socioeconomic status. The data from these reports is used to determine whether schools and districts have achieved adequate yearly progress (AYP) toward the goals. A progressive schedule of annual consequences is imposed for failure to meet AYP for schools and districts that receive federal Title I funds.

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The NCLB also defines qualifications needed by teachers and paraprofessionals to be considered "highly-qualified" to teach core academic subjects. Title I schools are required to notify parents if a teacher has been assigned who does not meet the qualifications.

The U.S. Department of Education must approve each state's assessment and accountability system, as well as the method chosen for determining highly-qualified teachers.

The NCLB is subject to reauthorization in 2007.

**Summary of Bill:**

Although Washington supports the goal of all students achieving at high levels and the attention the NCLB has brought on the improvements in education needed to reach all children, reauthorization provides an opportunity for essential changes.

Among the issues raised:

- Limited English-proficient students should not be included in overall accountability for at least three years.
- The uniform bar of performance by all students should be replaced by realistic requirements for continuous improvement.
- Unless appropriate funding is provided for annual large-scale assessments, states should be allowed to assess in selected years rather than annually. Even if funding is available, states should be able to use a variety of ways of assessing progress.
- The AYP provisions are overly prescriptive and rigid.
- The NCLB imposes significant costs to the state, local school districts, teachers, and paraprofessionals.

Congress is asked to raise authorized funding levels of the NCLB to cover the costs of carrying out the recommendations, to fully fund the law without reducing expenditures for other education programs, and to make improvements to address the issues raised.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.