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## **Rep. George Miller (D-CA) Opening Statement for The Hearing On “Examining the Federal Role in Public School Accountability”**

*WASHINGTON, D.C. – Below are the prepared remarks of U.S. Rep. George Miller (D-CA), the senior Democrat on the House Committee on Education and the Workforce for the hearing “Examining the Federal Role in Public School Accountability.”*

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Thank you, Mr. Chairman and good morning.

This morning’s hearing focuses on one of the most important issues in public school education: accountability.

We have had a number of hearings this year examining the federal role in education. I think there is universal agreement we need to update No Child Let Behind (NCLB). And witnesses have told us that there is in fact a need for the federal government in education and specifically, when it comes to accountability.

In our first education hearing this year, one of the Republican witnesses said that the federal government needs to put “guardrails in place to ensure quality and provide support.”

These guardrails must include college and career ready standards, goals to ensure those standards are met, and aggressive, but achievable annual performance targets so that states, districts and schools know what is expected of them and continue to move all students forward.

Without accountability, parents, teachers and school administrators have no way of knowing what exactly is happening in schools and whether our students are learning.

Parents shouldn’t wonder if their child’s school is preparing that child to succeed in college after graduation.

And if their child isn’t on track to graduate with those skills, parents should know their school has a responsibility to improve and meet their child’s needs.

Without accountability it is too easy to return to a time, prior to NCLB, when students’ actual performance was masked by averages.

Accountability was at the heart of No Child Left Behind. The law shined a bright light on how all students were performing, including low income students, minority students and students with disabilities.

10 years later there is a need for reform. And the need for transparency, accountability, and action remains critical to any reform.

When we wrote the law, our intention was very clear. We wanted a laser like focus on data and accountability to improve the education of students who were falling behind.

We took important steps forward, calling on communities to be transparent about the achievement of all children. And now we need to take the next steps: balance the accountability we worked so hard to implement in NCLB with greater flexibility at the local level and less prescription at the federal level.

We need an accountability system that works and refuses to let any student slip through the cracks. We must set high goals for all students and provide them with a challenging and rigorous learning environment that is tied to college and career ready standards.

Students need creative, effective teachers who hold them to high goals and standards – and can adjust their teaching strategies when needed.

These efforts are happening in some schools, in some states. But that's not good enough. These high expectations should be there for every student in every school.

The role of the federal government in accountability is essential to meet these high expectations and ensure that all children receive a high quality education. And the federal government should require that each state and each school district use data-based decision making to target interventions to improve the academic achievement of all students.

Attacking the federal role or eliminating it won't get us closer to being the best in the world in education. It won't help our economic security or our global competitiveness. What it will do is make things harder for the schools and students that need the most help. Getting the federal role right on accountability and in all matters is the smart way to move forward.

Unfortunately, in this committee, we've seen legislation that would be detrimental and harmful to the neediest students. The flexibility package we passed in July will create a slush fund for school districts.

It will take away money and resources from the neediest students and let school districts forgo the civil rights priorities and education equality promised to students under important court cases like Brown vs. the Board of the Education.

There is very little support for the bill in the education community because people who know the needs of school districts know why NCLB was signed into law—to ensure a quality education for all students—a goal that must not be forgotten in the next reauthorization.

I look forward to hearing from our witnesses today about accountability in your districts. I yield back.

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