



EDUCATION

NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND

In 2003, anticipating far-reaching impacts of sweeping elementary and secondary education reform resulting from the enactment of the No Child Left Behind Act, Senator Akaka launched a series of visits to elementary, middle, and high schools in Hawaii to gather feedback about the new law from students, teachers, and school administrators. He also met with U.S. Department of Education officials to open up the dialogue between the federal agency enforcing the law and those working to implement the law in Hawaii.

He continues to work with all parties involved and his colleagues in the Senate and House of Representatives to attain flexibility needed by Hawaii's schools that face serious challenges to full compliance with the No Child Left Behind Act.

TEACHER ACCULTURATION

Incorporating his substantial education experience as a former teacher and principal, and recognizing challenges presented by today's multicultural student bodies, Senator Akaka introduced legislation to help boost teacher abilities both in terms of content knowledge and classroom pedagogies. The Teacher Acculturation Act of 2005 proposes three new demonstration grant programs for pre-service and in-service teacher training and the establishment of centers of multicultural excellence, toward promoting a greater understanding of the problems facing teachers in multicultural classroom settings and methods to address them. The legislation is supported by the National Association for Multicultural Education and College of Education at the University of Hawaii.

AMERICAN COMPETITIVENESS

Senator Akaka has taken a leadership role in foreign language education in the introduction of the National Foreign Language Coordination Act of 2005. The measure establishes a National Foreign Language Coordination Council and a National Language Director to develop and implement a national foreign language strategy. The bill includes heads of certain federal agencies as members of the Council and was included as an amendment in the Senate-passed defense authorization bill for FY 2007, which is pending conference with the House. He along with Senator Richard Durbin (D-IL) also reintroduced the Homeland Security Education Act to increase educational opportunities in science, technology, engineering, mathematics (STEM), and foreign languages for all students, and ensure that the students of today are prepared to meet the global challenges of the future.

ECONOMIC AND PERSONAL FINANCE EDUCATION

Senator Akaka has also been proactive toward reducing financial and economic illiteracy through initiatives for the K-12 and higher education population to ensure that they have the tools they need to make better money management decisions, grounded in basic economic concepts.

COLLEGE READINESS

Senator Akaka joined Senator Joe Lieberman (D-CT) and others in introducing the College Pathway Act. Through grant assistance, this bill seeks to provide resources for states to establish or support existing dialogue between a state's early childhood, K through 12, higher education, and business communities to ensure students amass the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in college.