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S. HRG. 105–262

NATIONAL EDUCATION TESTING

HEARING

BEFORE A

SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

UNITED STATES SENATE

ONE HUNDRED FIFTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

SPECIAL HEARING

Printed for the use of the Committee on Appropriations

Available via the World Wide Web: http://www.access.gpo.gov/congress/senate

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

44–087 cc WASHINGTON : 1998

For sale by the U.S. Government Printing Office
Superintendent of Documents, Congressional Sales Office, Washington, DC 20402
ISBN 0–16–057150–2

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CONTENTS

	Page
Opening remarks of Senator Arlen Specter	1
Need for a hearing on voluntary national tests	1
Opening remarks of Senator Kennedy	2
Strengthening education and empowering parents	2
Underlying issues of voluntary national testing	3
Opening remarks of Senator Harkin	3
Voluntary system of tests	3
Statement of Hon. Richard W. Riley, Secretary of Education, Office of the Secretary, Department of Education	4
Prepared statement	8
Student enrollment is highest ever	4
Lesson in education: high standards work	4
Solid foundation in math and reading necessary	4
Rigorous national tests proposed in basics	5
Proposed tests an extension of NAEP test	5
NAEP measures of fourth grade reading proficiency	5
State tests use varying standards of achievement	6
Broad base of discussion and support for tests	6
Voluntary nature of tests	6
FIE authorization basis for testing authority	6
National Assessment Governing Board proposed	7
Commitment to raising standards; assessing performance	7
Administration of voluntary tests	10
Role of Federal versus State government in education	10
Differing processes for implementing tests, NAGB	10
Testimony and national debate on testing	11
Support for voluntary national tests	12
Test development	13
Relationship of parental involvement and quality	13
Financing the voluntary national tests	13
Tests as a means for more local involvement	14
Voluntary basis of proposed national tests	14
National Assessment Governing Board	15
National statistics on students taking algebra	15
Participation is voluntary for States and localities	16
Voluntary participation of localities	17
Development of voluntary national tests	17
Test to be available on Internet	18
Focus on debate should be on who designs the tests	19
Basic skills to be focus of proposed tests	19
Teaching methods are not a focus of proposed tests	20
Debate on placing restrictions on test development	20
Prohibition on development of national curriculum by Department of Education	21
Benefits of having wide range of testing options	22
Remarks of Representative William F. Goodling	23
Prepared statement	25
Educational area	27

NATIONAL EDUCATION TESTING

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 4, 1997

U.S. SENATE,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON LABOR, HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, AND EDUCATION, AND RELATED AGENCIES,
COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS,
Washington, DC.

The subcommittee met at 8:30 a.m., in room SD–192, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Arlen Specter (chairman) presiding.

Present: Senators Specter, Gorton, Gregg, Faircloth, and Harkin.

Also present: Senators Jeffords and Kennedy, and Representative Goodling.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

STATEMENT OF HON. RICHARD W. RILEY, SECRETARY OF EDUCATION ACCOMPANIED BY MARSHALL SMITH, ACTING DEPUTY SECRETARY

OPENING REMARKS OF SENATOR SPECTER

Senator SPECTER. Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. The Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education will now proceed.

NEED FOR A HEARING ON VOLUNTARY NATIONAL TESTS

We have scheduled this early-morning hearing because of the upcoming vote in the Senate on an issue relating to funding the administration's proposals to institute certain testing. This is a very, very important issue, and it has come into focus only in the course of the last several weeks.

Congressman Bill Goodling, who has just joined us, who chairs the House Committee on Education, had raised his concerns and objections to the funding. When we started debate on the funding bill for the Department of Education the day before yesterday, I was advised that a similar challenge was likely in the Senate. And, in fact, yesterday, an amendment was offered by Senator Gregg and Senator Coats to preclude any funding. And the day before yesterday, our distinguished Secretary of Education, Richard Riley, called me and urged my support. I said that I needed to know more about the issue.

I fully appreciate the need to have testing as an integral part of our education system. And our education system in America has been in a state of peril for many, many years now.

And after sleeping on it yesterday, I decided to call a hearing so that there could be broader currency to the Secretary's views on the need for voluntary national testing. We are pleased to have Congressman Goodling with us, as well. We have invited some others on the national scene, who have been opposed to the idea, to have some balance in the discussion. But I think we will have that with the views of Secretary Riley and the views of Chairman Goodling.

With that brief statement, I would yield to my colleague, Senator Kennedy. I just said to Senator Kennedy that I was pleased to be at a hearing with him, where I got to chair it.

Senator Kennedy.

OPENING REMARKS OF SENATOR KENNEDY

Senator KENNEDY. Thank you very much.

Mr. Chairman, I just want to thank you for, first of all, the courtesy of including us in this opportunity to hear from the Secretary and Chairman Goodling. We do have that opportunity to hear from the Secretary on a number of occasions, and have enormous regard for his leadership in education. And all of us have a high regard for Chairman Goodling, as well.

So those of us on the authorizing committee who have worked with you on education policy are grateful to you, and we want to thank you for your leadership in having this hearing.

We have had a good opportunity to talk with a number of our colleagues over the period of the past days, and there is a great interest in it. And I want to thank the Secretary and the chairman for being here and willing to share with us.

I would just take 1 minute or 2, because we are really here to hear from the Secretary.

STRENGTHENING EDUCATION AND EMPOWERING PARENTS

I am a strong supporter of the administration's position, because I think what we are really about is enhancing and empowering parents. Parents want to know how their children are doing. Parents have indicated that in all parts of the country.

And the real issue that I think we are going to have in the U.S. Senate: Are we going to deny them that opportunity by prohibiting the Department of Education the chance to work with an independent agency of government that has been working with parents and business and local communities in developing different tests that are being utilized at the present time? This is about empowering parents. And this is also, I consider, about strengthening education.

There may be poor parents, but they want to know how their children are doing, so that they can be more demanding of their schools and try to enhance the educational opportunity for their kids. And I think it is Secretary Riley that I have heard say so often, it is the children that have low expectations who are the ones that drop out. They are the ones that involve themselves in teenage pregnancy. They are the ones that involve themselves in gangs and drop out.

This is basically, I believe, an issue with regards to enhancing quality education and empowering parents. It is a voluntary pro-

gram, as I know the Secretary will speak about the essence of the program itself. But I am very grateful to the Secretary for the leadership in this area. I think it is very important.

And I thank the chair.

Senator SPECTER. Thank you very much, Senator Kennedy.

UNDERLYING ISSUES OF VOLUNTARY NATIONAL TESTING

I think Senator Kennedy accurately articulates the underlying educational issue. Perhaps it is a question of how the tests are structured, or perhaps a question of who gives the tests. I am just not sure.

I can say this, and I think it is worth just 1 minute to note. I mentioned to Secretary Riley when we talked on the phone the day before yesterday that there is a lot of concern in America—and I hear it a lot in Pennsylvania—about the issue of the Federal role. A lot of people are very concerned, on the grounds of the Federal Government being intrusive.

Voluntary national testing is not an easy issue; there is no specific congressional authorization or appropriation. Maybe it is a matter for the administration, or maybe it is not. It is a big, big matter which requires deliberation and attention as we go through the legislative process.

Mr. Secretary, your words here will be very influential, because we are on the brink of the vote.

Senator Harkin arrived at the last second, so before calling on you, Mr. Secretary, I will yield to my distinguished colleague.

OPENING REMARKS OF SENATOR HARKIN

Senator HARKIN. I apologize for being late. And, again, I appreciate your calling the hearing, Mr. Chairman, and the presence of Senator Kennedy from the authorizing committee, on which I also sit.

VOLUNTARY SYSTEM OF TESTS

This is an issue about which we have spoken, Mr. Secretary, on regarding the need for having a national system, so that parents can voluntarily know just how their kids are doing. I think that is what we have to keep in mind—that this is a voluntary system. It will enable parents all over this country and their children to understand exactly how they are achieving and what the results are. That is what we have to keep in mind.

I am delighted you are here, Mr. Secretary, and I hope that we can move ahead with what you have initiated in your Department in the past and move ahead to make sure that we have a national system of achievement results so that parents know just how their kids are doing.

Thank you very much.

Senator SPECTER. Thank you very much, Senator Harkin.

Welcome, again, Mr. Secretary. The floor is yours.

SUMMARY STATEMENT OF SECRETARY RILEY

Secretary RILEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Senator Kennedy and Senator Harkin. The time that we are coming together to discuss this issue is a very important time in education. Of course, it is the back-to-school time. And I would point out—can you hear all right?

Senator SPECTER. We can. You are not as loud as this microphone, Mr. Secretary. Perhaps you have to get elected to get a better microphone. [Laughter.]

Secretary RILEY. Should I go ahead?

Senator SPECTER. Yes; please do.

STUDENT ENROLLMENT IS HIGHEST EVER

Secretary RILEY. The fact is that school is starting up. More students than ever before are in our Nation's classrooms: 52.2 million. That number is going on up for the next 9 or 10 years, and then will plateau at a high level. If we give all of these young people in America a quality education, we will indeed remain strong and prosperous and free.

LESSON IN EDUCATION: HIGH STANDARDS WORK

Education begins with challenging our students to do their very best. That is why standards are important—rigorous standards that encourage students to work hard and stretch their minds.

If I can sum up everything that I have learned about education in three words, I would say this: High standards work. That is because schools and students rise to the expectations that we set for them. Standards work only, though, when they reach the classroom and they reach the student. That is very important for this particular discussion.

I saw this happen, again, just a few days ago when I visited Philadelphia. And as you know, you and I talked about it, Mr. Chairman. The citywide scores in math, reading, and science are on the rise there in 4th, 8th, and 11th grade. And why is that? It is because, I am very pleased to say, Philadelphia is getting serious about standards.

SOLID FOUNDATION IN MATH AND READING NECESSARY

Public education is also doing better in many places thanks to tougher standards. But I do not think we need to kid ourselves. We still have a long way to go. Most importantly, we need to make sure that every young American gets a solid foundation in the basics—reading and math. Reading scores have remained flat for a quarter of a century. And the results of the third international math and science study [TIMSS], show that our fourth-graders are below the international average in math, even though, at fourth grade, they rated very well.

President Clinton and I took a look at all of this and decided that we needed to take action.

And that is why we have proposed rigorous voluntary national tests in fourth-grade reading and eighth-grade math. Philadelphia, along with more than a dozen other major urban areas in seven

States, have already agreed to participate. I spoke about these tests before this subcommittee last April, and I am so happy to offer the committee more information about them today.

RIGOROUS NATIONAL TESTS PROPOSED IN BASICS

Fourth-grade reading and eighth-grade math were chosen because these two basic skills are the make or breakpoints in a child's education. Let me take just a brief moment to look at reading.

Teachers will tell you that students who cannot read independently by the fourth grade often get down on themselves. Poor readers become frustrated. They start falling behind. They often head down the road to truancy and dropping out. Some even begin to make the wrong choices about drugs. We can save these young people if we identify who needs help, which schools need help, what the help is they need in these basic areas, and then give them the assistance that they need.

Now, let me mention math briefly. Our proposal for an eighth-grade math test includes algebra and some geometry. That is because the vast majority of experts view those subjects as the gateway courses that prepare young people to take college prep courses in high school. Currently, only 20 percent of our eighth graders take algebra. Yet in many countries, such as Japan, 100 percent of the eighth graders take algebra. We have got to close the algebra gap or our international competitors will move ahead of us.

PROPOSED TESTS AN EXTENSION OF NAEP TEST

Our proposal for voluntary national tests is not revolutionary. We are simply taking the National Assessment of Educational Progress Test one step further. That is a test that is out there now and given on a sample basis right now. The NAEP, of course, does not test all students; it tests a sample for the country and for the 43 States that have bought into the State NAEP testing. And it provides no information at all for the individual students, for the individual school or the individual school district.

We want to change that. And that is why I call the new national test a personalized version of NAEP, because it will be used to test individual students in participating schools or States. These tests will tell parents and teachers and policymakers and students about what it takes to reach national and even international standards of achievement—something no other test currently does.

Equally important, these tests will use the rigorous NAEP framework and hold students to high standards. High standards—that is not always a part of other tests.

NAEP MEASURES OF FOURTH GRADE READING PROFICIENCY

I have attached a chart to my testimony that illustrates this point. You can see that on some State tests, students appear to be doing high-level, proficient work, as shown on this chart, Mr. Chairman and Senators—Senator Faircloth, and others.

For example, in South Carolina, the State test shows that 82 percent of our students read proficiently. The NAEP test shows 20 percent. In Wisconsin, some of them are closer, but it shows how

it is all around the ballpark in terms of the various State testing mechanisms.

STATE TESTS USE VARYING STANDARDS OF ACHIEVEMENT

You can see that in some of these States, the students appear to be doing high-level, proficient work. But the students really do not do as well when measured by the NAEP high standards of excellence. This means that some parents are being told that their children are doing A-level work when in fact they are doing C-level work, based upon a national scale. A voluntary national test, linked to high standards, will give parents and teachers a much clearer, more realistic picture of how their children are actually doing.

Please keep in mind that our people are very mobile. They move from State to State and school district to school district constantly. Perhaps most important of all, these tests will get the whole country buzzing about education. They already have. And I am very pleased to see all of the debate and the discussion that has taken place.

I have great respect for Congressman Goodling. And he and I work closely together on many, many matters. I am sorry we differ somewhat on this. But I do think this conversation and this discussion about testing is very good.

BROAD BASE OF DISCUSSION AND SUPPORT FOR TESTS

I think that I have heard more discussion about it and about education generally in the last 6 months than I have ever heard. And I think that is a good, bottom-up change that is taking place. The American people are ready for this.

The latest Gallup Poll found that two out of three Americans say the national test would improve student achievement a great deal or quite a lot. They have been very positive about this idea.

VOLUNTARY NATURE OF TESTS

Now, I know that some in Congress and elsewhere have expressed concern. The President and I have moved to address these concerns. First, let me reiterate that the tests are voluntary, as was pointed out by Senator Kennedy and Senator Harkin. No State nor school will be required to offer these tests as a condition of receiving Federal funding of any kind. It is not connected to any other program of any kind.

FIE AUTHORIZATION BASIS FOR TESTING AUTHORITY

Second, there is ample authority to fund development and use of the test under the fund for improvement of education [FIE] authorized by section 10101 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. This statute expressly authorizes the Secretary of Education to support, and I quote, ''nationally significant programs and projects to improve the quality of education.'' That is in the current authority.

FIE, as it is called, and similar previous authorities, have been used by the U.S. Department of Education under both Republican and Democratic administrations for a wide range of national and

local activities very similar to this initiative. And that has been characteristic. And I can give some examples of that if you like.

NATIONAL ASSESSMENT GOVERNING BOARD PROPOSED

Third, the administration transmitted legislation to Congress yesterday which would authorize an already-established independent bipartisan board to oversee the test, the National Assessment Governing Board, or NAGB. We urge the Congress to pass that legislation without delay.

COMMITMENT TO RAISING STANDARDS; ASSESSING PERFORMANCE

Fourth, these tests are not part of any attempt to create a national curriculum. The test analyzes results. Can the fourth-grader read? Can the eighth-grader do basic math? They do not tell you how to teach math or how to teach reading. It is simply a measure of the results.

Individual tests will not be collected by the Federal Government. We will have nothing to do with scores or the tests once they have been developed and are being used locally. States and school districts will have complete control over the results. The tests are designed to help teachers and principals and school boards and parents shape their own curricula. It is a bottom-up effort.

Fifth, there are some who say the test will be too difficult for children in poorer schools. I am very sympathetic to that argument. And I have carefully studied it and listened to it. Some wealthier school districts might have an advantage, but I will tell you, it is absolutely true, in my judgment, that effort and commitment to excellence matter even more. The fastest way to turn eager, young students into 16-year-old dropouts is to expect too little of them and to dumb down their education or keep their parents uninformed about their lack of education. That does not serve any useful purpose.

The process and other issues are important, but, please, let us keep our eye on this prize. This morning, Jim Orr of UNUM Corp., Chairman of the National Alliance of Business, issued a statement that I think said it best. He said there is certainly a place for legitimate discussion about details. And you and I have talked about that. But these and other arguments should not weaken or overshadow our commitment to raising academic standards and assessing student performance. He goes on to say: Without a national assessment, raising academic standards will be, at best, an amorphous goal.

Mr. Chairman, there is a movement in the Congress now, as you know, that would deny States and school districts this right to choose whether they want to give this test or not. Yesterday, the executive director of the National Association of State School Boards wrote a letter to the Members of Congress, which said: "We believe that States should be afforded the opportunity to decide for themselves whether to take part in these national assessments."

PREPARED STATEMENT

And I heartily agree with that view. I believe it is time to get very serious about education, and do it child by child. These tests

will help mobilize the American people in what I think will be a great national effort to raise reading and math achievement.

Because this is so important for our country, I really see it as a patriotic cause. Let us move forward into this next century with high education standards, and make sure that we meet them.

Thank you very much.

[The statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. RICHARD W. RILEY

Mr. Chairman and members of the subcommittee: Thank you for this opportunity to appear before you at this very special time of year—back-to-school time. More students than ever before are in our nation's classrooms—52.2 million. And that number is going to keep on growing. If we give all of these young people a quality education, America will remain strong, prosperous, and free.

Education begins with challenging students to do their best. That's why standards are so important—rigorous standards that encourage students to work hard and stretch their minds. If I could sum up everything I've learned about education in three words, they would be "high standards work." That's because schools and students rise to the expectations we set for them.

I saw this happen again just a couple of days ago when I visited Philadelphia. As you know, Chairman Specter, citywide scores in math, reading, and science are on the rise there in 4th, 8th, and 11th grades. Why? Because Philadelphia is getting serious about standards.

Public education is also doing better in many other places, thanks to tougher standards. But let's not kid ourselves—we still have a long way to go. Most importantly, we need to make sure that every young American gets a solid foundation in the basics—reading and math. Reading scores have remained flat for a quarter of a century. And the results of the Third International Math and Science Study [TIMSS] show that our 8th graders are below the international average in math.

President Clinton and I took a look at all this and decided that we needed to take action. That is why we have proposed rigorous, voluntary national tests in 4th-grade reading and 8th-grade math. Philadelphia, along with more than a dozen other major urban areas and seven states, have already agreed to participate. I spoke about these tests before the subcommittee last April, and I am happy to offer the committee more information about them today.

Fourth-grade reading and 8th-grade math were chosen because these two basic skills are the "make-or-break" points in a child's education. Let's take a look at reading.

Teachers will tell you that students who cannot read independently by the 4th grade often get down on themselves. Poor readers become frustrated, they start falling behind, and they often head down the road to truancy and dropping out. Some even begin to make the wrong choices about drugs. We can save these young people if we identify who needs help, which schools need help, and then give them the assistance they need.

Now let me talk about math. Our proposal for an 8th-grade math test includes algebra and even some geometry. That's because the vast majority of experts view those subjects as the gateway courses that prepare young people to take college-prep courses in high school. Currently, only 20 percent of our 8th graders take algebra. Yet in many countries, such as Japan, 100 percent of 8th graders take algebra. We've got to close "the Algebra Gap" or our international competitors will move ahead of us.

Our proposal for voluntary national tests is not revolutionary. We are simply taking the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) tests one step further. Right now, NAEP does not test all students, and it provides no information at all on individual students, schools, or districts.

We want to change that and that is why I call the new national tests a "personalized version of NAEP" because they will test individual students in participating schools or states. These tests will tell parents, teachers, policy makers, and students about what it takes to reach national and even international standards of achievement—something no other test currently does.

Equally important, these tests will use the rigorous NAEP frameworks and hold students to high standards. That doesn't always happen with other tests. I have attached a chart to my testimony that illustrates this point. You can see that on some state tests, students appear to be doing high-level, proficient work. But students don't do as well when measured against NAEP's high standards of excellence. This

means that some parents are being told that their children are doing "A" level work, when in reality they're only getting a "C" education. Voluntary national tests, linked to high standards, will give parents and teachers a much clearer, more realistic picture of how their children are doing.

Perhaps most important of all, these tests will get the whole country buzzing. They already have. I think I've heard more discussion about education in the last 6 months than I've ever heard, and that's the way to make bottom-up change happen. The American people are ready for this. The latest Gallup Poll found that two out of three Americans say that national tests would improve student achievement "a great deal or quite a lot."

Now, I know that some in the Congress and elsewhere have expressed concern about the tests. The President and I have moved to address these concerns. First, let me reiterate that the tests are voluntary. No state or school will be required to offer these tests as a condition of receiving federal funding.

Second, there is ample authority to fund development and use of the tests under the Fund for the Improvement of Education, authorized by Section 10101 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. This statute expressly authorizes the Secretary of Education to support "nationally significant programs and projects to improve the quality of education". F.I.E. and similar previous authorities have been used by the U.S. Department of Education under both Republican and Democratic Administrations for a wide range of national and local activities similar to this initiative.

Third, the Administration transmitted legislation to Congress yesterday which would authorize an already established, independent, bipartisan board to oversee the tests—the National Assessment Governing Board, or "NAGB." We urge the Congress to pass this legislation without delay.

Fourth, these tests are not part of any attempt to create a national curriculum. Individual test scores will not be collected by the federal government. States and school districts will have control over the results, and they are designed to help teachers, principals, school boards, and parents to shape their own curricula.

Fifth, there are some who say the tests will be too difficult for children in our poorer schools. Yes, richer schools may have advantages, but effort and commitment to excellence matter more. The fastest way to turn eager young students into 16-year-old drop-outs is to expect too little of them and dumb down their education.

Process and other issues are important, but let's keep our eye on the prize. This morning, Jim Orr of the UNUM Corporation and chairman of the National Alliance of Business issued a statement that said it best. He said, "There is certainly a place for legitimate discussion over details * * *. But these and other arguments should not weaken or overshadow our commitment to raising academic standards and assessing student performance. Without a national assessment, raising academic standards will be, at best, an amorphous goal."

Mr. Chairman, there is a movement in the Congress now that would deny states and school districts the right to choose whether they want to offer these tests. Yesterday, the executive director of the National Association of State School Boards wrote a letter to members of Congress which said, "We believe the states should be afforded the opportunity to decide for themselves whether to take part in these national assessments."

I heartily agree with that view. And I believe it is time to get serious about education. These tests will help mobilize the American people in a great national effort to raise reading and math achievement. Because this is so important for our country, I see it as a great patriotic cause. Let us move forward into the 21st century with high standards—and let's make sure we meet them. Thank you very much.

NAEP MEASURES HIGH STANDARDS: STATE 1994 NAEP SCORES FOR FOURTH GRADE READING COMPARED TO STATES' OWN ASSESSMENTS

	NAEP standard	State standard
Connecticut	38	48
New Hampshire	36	29
Wisconsin	35	88
North Carolina	30	65
Tennessee	27	62
Kentucky	26	30
Maryland	26	39
Georgia	26	39

NAEP MEASURES HIGH STANDARDS: STATE 1994 NAEP SCORES FOR FOURTH GRADE READING COMPARED TO STATES' OWN ASSESSMENTS—Continued

	NAEP standard	State standard
Delaware	23	14
South Carolina	20	82
Louisiana	15	88

Source: U.S. Department of Education, State departments of education, National Education Goals Panel.

ADMINISTRATION OF VOLUNTARY TESTS

Senator SPECTER. Thank you very much, Mr. Secretary. Your concluding comment puts this issue on the highest level. I agree with you that there is no issue more important in education that we confront. It is a matter not only of the quality of life of the individual to have the maximum educational opportunity, but also to strengthen the Nation as we compete globally. There is no doubt about that.

On a very personal note, I say with some frequency that my brother, two sisters and I can share in the American dream, because we had the education our parents did not. They both were immigrants. They had virtually none. And the issue which we face here today is how to achieve better education; testing, I think, is necessary.

The question which I see is: How will the tests be administered? Should they be administered by the program which the U.S. Department of Education has articulated, through you, this morning? Is there a way of maintaining that kind of testing at the State level? Or does it have to be done at the national level? And how do we come to this point?

ROLE OF FEDERAL VERSUS STATE GOVERNMENT IN EDUCATION

There is a furious debate in America today about the role of the Federal Government, contrasted with State government—and contrasted with local government. There is acceptance that education is the responsibility of local government and State government. And you very carefully said that you did not look for a national curriculum. You have emphasized the voluntary aspect of the program.

Even with that, there are serious questions raised about the so-called foot in the door doctrine, as to where this is going to lead. Substantial funds have been spent. Last year, $12.2 million was expended on this program. And this year there are plans to spend $16.2 million. And a significant question which arises in my mind is whether the Congress ought not to have a say and a voice in what we are doing here structurally.

DIFFERING PROCESSES FOR IMPLEMENTING TESTS, NAGB

I do not propose to get into any turf battle, as such, between the executive and the legislative branches when you are doing something as important as educating our children. But there is a very fundamental issue as to how we divide responsibilities between the

Congress and the President, and how we divide authority between the Federal Government and the States.

I note that you have sent over legislation just yesterday, as you have just said, through the independent, bipartisan door. The initial question which I will have is: "Why the distinction between calling on Congress to act on an independent, bipartisan board with the action which the administration has taken as an executive function of setting out these tasks? Is there some suggestion that when you are looking for congressional action on the board that there is an acknowledgement that it ought to be congressional action?"

Let me put the question in as pointed a way as I can. What concerns will the administration have if this matter received the review of the Congress and the Congress acted to authorize these tests, aside from the obvious delay that would be involved? Suppose the Congress adopted a very fast timetable, and we could craft that, perhaps, on the appropriation bill, setting deadlines as to our action through the authorizing process—perhaps as little as 60 days. It would be pretty hard for the Congress to do that, but if we can have a hearing overnight, perhaps we could do that.

What would be the harm in letting the authorizing committees of the Congress make a decision on whether this testing ought to be undertaken, just as you have called upon Congress to decide whether there should be this independent, bipartisan board?

Secretary RILEY. Let me speak to that in a couple of ways. First of all, we think that time is of the essence. It is very important. It will take at least 2 years to get this process of developing the tests done, and done properly. We are starting with the NAEP test which is available now. Some of you might not realize that NAEP is given as a sample test. An individual student probably takes only a seventh of all the NAEP items. It takes seven different people to take it all. In this way, we end up with a good research study.

This national test is simply taking the NAEP test and making it a test where one person takes all seven parts in 90 minutes. It is not like we are coming from nowhere to create a new test. Even at that, it takes 2 years to develop the tests. And we think time is of the essence. I used to serve on NAGB for some period of time, and I really believe in what they are doing. They are a respected group, but current law would not permit NAGB to have authority for the national tests. And so what we have planned all along is to get this process going, and then ask Congress to consider shifting the oversight and the policymaking to NAGB. And that is really what we have done.

TESTIMONY AND NATIONAL DEBATE ON TESTING

I would point out that we have testified any number of times before Congress, before Mr. Goodling's committee, before this subcommittee, on the subject of testing. And we have had lengthy discussions about it. We have had meetings all over the country. The transcripts have been on the Internet. We have had all the State people in here; 47 States had people in here for an all-day meeting. That meeting was on C-SPAN. When Lamar Alexander was here as Secretary of Education, he supported development of voluntary

national standards without any specific authority, based on this general authority that we have to do what is necessary, in our judgment, to improve education. The language that I read in my statement——

Senator SPECTER. Mr. Secretary, let me interrupt you for just a minute. We only have 5 minutes per round, and we have quite good attendance here today. When you talk about the national debate, I think that really is important. And I think that the focus which we have today will give greater visibility to this issue than perhaps it has ever had, notwithstanding the discussions you just referred to.

SUPPORT FOR VOLUNTARY NATIONAL TESTS

While the program is endorsed by the Council of Great City Schools, I note that only 15 out of 50 have come forward to participate. Only six States have agreed to take part in the first round of testing. And I cite that as some suggestion, or indication perhaps, of some reluctance, given the very deep-seated concern about the Federal role in education and whether to stop it from becoming intrusive.

We went through this in Goals 2000; we saved the program by delimiting it. While there would be some delay, and I do not like delay, would not there be an opportunity for a better national consensus if we go through the hearing process and focus specifically on the authorizing committees, Senator Jeffords, and in the House, Representative Goodling, to have a national resolution through the representative democracy we have through the congressional action?

Secretary RILEY. Well, first of all, Mr. Chairman, this is a voluntary test. States could decide to take it. School districts could decide to take it or not. They could decide to take it the first year or the second year, or whatever. Seven States have come in and said that they want to take the test. Numbers of others have expressed extreme interest. Chief school officers, and Governors, are very, very interested.

Although only 15 cities have decided to use the tests, they include New York, Philadelphia, Los Angeles, Chicago, Houston, and Atlanta, and on and on and on. And also, in the seven States, you have Charlotte, you have Baltimore, you have Boston. So there is really major interest in American cities. And that, to me, is a very good point.

We all have talked about urban education problems and accountability. I think that is very critical. And to have major cities come in and say, we want to have our children take these basic skills tests, as soon as possible, makes it a critical matter in terms of time. So we think that the sooner we can carefully get this out there for them, the better education will be.

Senator SPECTER. Thank you very much, Mr. Secretary. My time has expired.

I yield now to my distinguished colleague, Senator Harkin.

Senator HARKIN. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

I would like to just go ahead and yield my time at the beginning to the ranking member of our authorizing committee, Senator Kennedy.

Senator KENNEDY. Thank you.

TEST DEVELOPMENT

Thank you very much, Senator Harkin. And again, thank you, Senator Specter. We have increased Federal spending about $3.5 billion last year. I think most Americans want to know when we are going to try and see an enhancement, in terms of education, at the local community level. As the chairman has pointed out, this is a local responsibility. All of us understand it. States have some interest. But our role is if we are going to be investing Federal funds in these areas of education—and they are very, very limited—most American families want to see how that can be enhanced.

And I agree with you, Mr. Secretary, if you have the—when we have the authority to go ahead and have the NAEP test, which goes ahead and does the testing—it seems that the administration has been very forthcoming, to say that an independent group, this NAGB group, which has had the attention even with the Department of Education, and is made up of family members, it is made up of parents, it is made up of schoolteachers, it is made up of local representatives—you have made an enormous concession to have them develop this test.

And I would not think you would want to get whipsawed, which you are not, to say, look—you are trying to say OK, if there are those that do not want the Department of Education to do it, we will let the other independent agency do it, and then, to get wrapped up and say, well, we need other additional kinds of authorization, at a time when I think parents all over the country want to see an enhancement of their children's education—I think, myself, you are in a strong position.

RELATIONSHIP OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT AND QUALITY

But I think the basic question is and the case you want to try to make is how this test, you believe, will really move us toward an enhancement of quality education at the local level. I think if we meet that test, then I think we get the overwhelming support.

Why do you believe that if the parents understand how their children are doing in the areas of literacy at the fourth grade and math at the eighth grade, how this can be a tool to really make education quality better at the local level?

FINANCING THE VOLUNTARY NATIONAL TESTS

Secretary RILEY. Well, first of all, on the issue that the chairman was inquiring about, I want everybody to understand that it is the 1999 budget that would have to support the costs of the administration of the test, as the President has proposed to pay for it the first year. So, really, all we are talking about for 1998 is creating an individualized version of NAEP as opposed to a sample test. Doing that is not such a tremendous leap from what we already do. It is a pretty good leap in funding when you then have the test administered. That will be in next year's budget, and get all the debate and all the discussion.

TESTS AS A MEANS FOR MORE LOCAL INVOLVEMENT

If you look back, we have had all the talk about education ideas and all the rhetoric about education, and now we have 50 States working on standards. And they have either gone far with it, or some are in an earlier stage of it. I think that is very, very encouraging, and it is exciting, and it is working. That is what is important.

Now, if you get standards down into the classroom, down to the student, down to the family, as is the case for these students in Philadelphia, who were lined up in one of the poorest sections of Philadelphia, and these kids, minority kids, were standing there with these gold medallions on for having read at least 100 books this summer. I am telling you, the pride in those kids, you could not believe it. They want to take this test. They are asking for it.

Parents, then, can get involved themselves in this idea of being part of a national effort for improvement in education—high standards, tough work. People are not going to like the results on these tests when they hear them. It is going to be tough. And the next year, it is going to be better. And the next year, it is going to be better. These tests are the best way for parents and children to become very much involved in this national movement to improve education.

The control of education is State and local. We are not getting into that. Reading and math are basic skills, and the tests are voluntary. But they will bring about, in our judgment, a national movement for people, bottom up, to get involved in their own children's education.

VOLUNTARY BASIS OF PROPOSED NATIONAL TESTS

Senator KENNEDY. Just really a final question, because I know the time is moving on. Just emphasize the voluntary aspects of this. As I understand it, States make the judgment about whether they want to move ahead with this program, so it is completely voluntary for the States. As I understand it, the States make a judgment that if certain schools want to opt out, they have that kind of flexibility.

So what we are basically saying is that the States can make that judgment about how they want to structure the program. They can accommodate local communities. They can even accommodate individuals who are setting up some rules, in terms of accommodating individuals that desire to have the children take it, that are included in the program. But that can be accommodated, can it not?

Secretary RILEY. Yes.

Senator KENNEDY. So that every aspect of this is a voluntary program. And the question is, I think, and I would just be interested in your reaction, are we going to be in a position where we are going to block the States from making some judgment, local communities, making some judgment, and the parents making some judgments in terms of how to try and enhance quality education?

Secretary RILEY. Well, I certainly hope not. But districts, Senator, as you know, can make the decision to use the test. And that is what these big cities—they are the large districts—are doing.

And if you say, why not some of the small ones? It is just that we have not gone to them.

I am positive that you would find an enormous number of districts that would come in and want to take the test. But the large cities have just talked among themselves. And I think that is a very interesting turn of events—to have the large urban areas wanting to have high accountability and high standards.

NATIONAL ASSESSMENT GOVERNING BOARD

Senator KENNEDY. Just a final question. As I understand it, the organization that would establish these tests, basically, has been made up of Republicans and Democrats; there is a number of appointees that have been made by the previous administration. Could you just clarify that makeup of the organization.

Secretary RILEY. That is exactly right. I know you have to have a Democrat Governor and a Republican Governor. It has to be bipartisan, and it is bipartisan. And I know I was doing some appointments yesterday, and I know two appointments that I made to the board are Republican and two are Democrats. It is a bipartisan group, and it has a great deal of expertise. It is a group that has the expertise to really know testing. Testing is a very complex issue.

Senator SPECTER. Thank you very much, Senator Kennedy.

Senator Faircloth.

Senator FAIRCLOTH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Secretary, I am delighted to have you here this morning.

NATIONAL STATISTICS ON STUDENTS TAKING ALGEBRA

A number of things about this concern me. No. 1, you said that only 20 percent of the students are taking algebra. I do not know whether that is nationwide or——

Secretary RILEY. That is nationwide.

Senator FAIRCLOTH. Nationwide. Well, how are you going to give a test, testing algebra, to eighth-graders when only 20 percent of them have ever had it?

Secretary RILEY. Well, the States and school districts are moving quickly into the algebra area.

Senator FAIRCLOTH. So they are going to have to be moving real quickly, as fast as you are moving with this test?

Secretary RILEY. They certainly are. And I think if you talk to any educator in America, they will tell you it is the right direction to go. Any one of them, and especially a conservative educator, will tell you in a hurry it is wrong that to have the expectations for American students to be less challenging than the expectations for other students around the world. The idea that we cannot handle algebra in the seventh and eighth grade is wrong. Schools are moving toward algebra and some geometric principles in the seventh and eighth grade, and I think that is the right way to go.

Algebraic principles are introduced in elementary school, but I am talking about taking algebra itself.

PARTICIPATION IS VOLUNTARY FOR STATES AND LOCALITIES

Senator FAIRCLOTH. Another question, you say it is voluntary. Does that mean to the State, to the school district, to the school within the district, to the student?

Secretary RILEY. It is voluntary as far as the State or the school district.

Senator FAIRCLOTH. How about the student?

Secretary RILEY. That is up to the State and the school district. In other words, we, then, just like any other testing matter, we would look to the State and the school district for their—they would basically handle how that is done within their district. They would do it like other testing is done.

Senator FAIRCLOTH. Well, if you give the student the right to opt out of the test, what real benefit is it going to be? Because the school is going to want to look good, the eighth-grade teacher, the fourth-grade teacher is going to want to look good. So would not there be a tendency to encourage those less likely to do well on the test, just simply to not take the test, you go play basketball or go swimming today?

Secretary RILEY. Senator, that would be handled on the State and local level. I am not saying how it should be or should not be. That is up to them. And normally, for a test that is given in a local school district, they would not have a test and let people pick and choose who is going to take the test. Just like a child who takes a test in algebra in the homeroom. That is up to the local school district as to how they handle the test.

What I am saying is they can do it basically like they do other tests all the time. And it is up to them. But as far as we are concerned, the voluntary part is at the State or the school district.

Senator FAIRCLOTH. Well, the thing that I am getting at, Governor Riley, is this: In all likelihood, Hiltonhead schools would want to take this test. In all likelihood, Aynor would not want to take the test.

Secretary RILEY. Well, I do not know that I can agree with you at all. I appreciate what you are saying. And you are really into my home territory now. [Laughter.]

I know both districts very well. But what I would say to you is look at these big cities. They want the test. And they are the very people who others would have said years ago would run from the test. They are worried about where their students are and whether they are learning to read and do basic math? And that is why I say this is so encouraging. It is right exciting.

I was in Philadelphia, and I keep mentioning it because I was just there, and they had in the school district there—in the city of Philadelphia—an increase in the number of students taking their test of some 16 percent. And of that 16 percent, a good portion of them were children who had English as a second language or were disabled or in special education. It is amazing how they are expanding out. They have worked and worked to make sure all of their kids, as close as possible, were part of this process. And even at that, it was up—the scores were up.

And I think I associate a lot of that with standards and with getting serious about education and hard work and parents getting in-

volved and children reading books, and the kind of thing that I saw going on there. Many people expect districts that automatically do well would want to us the test and that others would not, but I think the results are showing just the opposite.

Senator SPECTER. Thank you very much, Senator Faircloth.

Senator Harkin.

Senator HARKIN. Thank you very much.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION OF LOCALITIES

Mr. Secretary, I could not help but listen to the questions posed by my colleague from North Carolina. It almost seems that what he is saying is it would encourage those less likely to do well to not take the test. It almost seems to be an indictment of local school districts, that they really do not want to know how well they are doing, especially poor districts.

That may be true in some instances, but I have never yet met a superintendent—and I have talked to a lot of them in poor areas, and at schools with underprivileged children—who does not want to know how their kids are ranking with other kids around the country, so that they can go to their local governing bodies and say, look, we are not doing as well as you may think we are doing. And so I do not know anything about Aynor—I do not know where Aynor is or what it is about. [Laughter.]

But I would assume that if that is the case here, that the superintendent of schools there, those people would want to know so that they can go to their Governors and their State and their local governing officials and say, look, we need more help in our schools because our kids are falling behind in those tests. So I would not want to assume that they would not want to know.

DEVELOPMENT OF VOLUNTARY NATIONAL TESTS

Second, there seems to be some thought that these tests have been developed by Washington bureaucrats, that it is just all developed by Washington, and it is all going to go from the top, down to the States and local school districts. How were these tests developed? Who had input?

Secretary RILEY. Well, let me describe some of the process, because I think that is important. First of all, you have the NAEP process, which is the accepted process, and I think it is a very thorough one and a very fair one and a very well-accepted one. We used the same process here. And, as I say, the same kind of thing was done previously, on the same authority, by previous administrations.

Following the NAEP process, then, being very thorough and very open, we then went to the Council of Chief School Officers. And then they as they do for the NAEP test, established committees, very representative and bipartisan committees, to then do the blueprint of the test. That is the best way I would describe it.

And then that blueprint is submitted to the test publishing companies, who then bid on developing the test—in a very open process. And then they prepare the items of the test. There are all kinds of ways for that to be overseen. What we are proposing is to move the whole thing under NAGB and let them handle all the pol-

icy as it goes along, which will be very, very significant and very important.

Then the National Academy of Sciences, as the House and the Senate have already proposed in the committee reports will evaluate the test. It is a very lengthy, complicated process, but, the test will not be moved forward until that is done.

TEST TO BE AVAILABLE ON INTERNET

And again, it is all accepted or not. It has been very open. Very shortly after the test is given—and I think this is very important and I do not think people realize it has never been done before—all items on the test would be made available on the Internet. Home schoolers could take the test and give it to their children. Others could analyze the items and say, this was wrong, and write a letter to the editor, or get on the TV, or whatever. It will be a wide open process and test.

That is what we are trying to do to—make it open—so parents can feel part of it. This is for their children. It is not going to be some private deal, where we cannot show you the items, and you do not know why your child did poorly, or whatever. The test is going to be out there for everyone to use. We think the public will be very pleased that this will be a new way of doing business. It will be more open than anything that has ever been done in testing.

Senator HARKIN. Mr. Secretary, how does this work with Goals 2000 in terms of trying to get the States and local school districts to set up higher standards? Now we want to come in with the voluntary testing? Does this fit in with Goals 2000?

Secretary RILEY. Well, it fits in. And Goals 2000, of course, deals with establishing national goals and voluntary national standards. And that process, of course, was started under the previous administration. But we have followed through with it. It is the right thing to do. They are strictly voluntary, but they set world-class standards for all the States to use or not use. They are not connected with any other program but hopefully are something that would be helpful to the States.

Some States use a lot of the voluntary standards; some use none of them. That does not matter. They develop their own State standards. And they receive their Goals 2000 money and use it as they want to use it to reach their own standards and their own goals. The national tests fit in here. The are directed at the basic skills, reading at fourth grade and math at the key eighth-grade level. Voluntarily, States can have their students take these high-standard tests if they would like to.

And then the parents would know how their children stand, not based on some State scale, but based upon a national and, for math, international scale. And I think that is a very powerful statement.

Senator SPECTER. Thank you very much, Senator Harkin.

Senator Gregg.

FOCUS OF DEBATE SHOULD BE ON WHO DESIGNS THE TESTS

Senator GREGG. Mr. Secretary, it is a pleasure to have you here today.

If you are going to have a test—and, first, I do not believe this debate is about the question of national testing, in my viewpoint. I support a national testing system. What I do not support is having the Department of Education participate in its development, not because I do not have a great deal of confidence in you, Mr. Secretary—I have a tremendous amount of respect for you, both as Secretary of Education and as a former Governor—but because there are forces who influence the Department of Education, who, I believe, have an agenda, which is to move education to the Federal level, to create new Federal standards and create Federal curriculum, and to basically usurp what I consider to be the core, almost, of quality education, which is local control.

And, thus, this issue is not a debate over whether or not we should have national tests, although there are some who oppose national testing generally, but from my standpoint, it is not a question of whether we should have a national test. And as the author of one of the amendments that is now pending on the issue, I want to make that clear. It is a debate over how we design a national test, how it gets designed, how it gets initiated, how it gets created and energized.

BASIC SKILLS TO BE FOCUS OF PROPOSED TESTS

And I guess the first question that I would have for you is, if you are going to have a national test, do not you have to have a curriculum you base it on? I mean you cannot test in a vacuum. The test has to be based off of some set of facts or some set of proposals, or some set of concepts which are agreed on in which you ask a question: Did Christopher Columbus discover the Western Hemisphere?

Secretary RILEY. You are talking abou history. What these tests are is about——

Senator GREGG. Well, let us go to science.

Secretary RILEY. No; let us go to basics.

Senator GREGG. Does the Sun go around the Moon, or does the Moon go around the Earth?

Secretary RILEY. We are not talking about science either. We are talking about math and reading.

Senator GREGG. Well, let us go to math.

Secretary RILEY. All right, math.

Senator GREGG. Does 2 and 2 equal 4, or does 2 and 2 equal something else?

Secretary RILEY. That is a good example. [Laughter.]

It does not equal something else. It equals 4.

We have tried carefully to avoid the very thing you are talking about, and not to get into those controversial—legitimately controversial—areas such as history.

Senator GREGG. Well, reading and math both have been—math has been one of the most extraordinarily controversial teaching areas probably of the last 15 years—the question of new math, the question of whether or not math would be taught in a conceptual

way or whether it would be taught the experience way, whether you go to the grocery store with the kids, or whether you are going to teach them in a rote way, where they memorize the tables.

I know the question has been very highly debated as to whether or not you teach multiplication through memorization or whether you teach it through experience. So there is—and then the manner in which math has certainly been addressed—and there has been a considerable debate over the process. And of course you have got reading on this level, too.

TEACHING METHODS ARE NOT A FOCUS OF PROPOSED TESTS

So I guess my question was, does not there have to be a curriculum off of which you base an examination?

Secretary RILEY. Senator, we are talking about the basic skills of math and reading. All that is measured on the test are the achievement results. You can reach those results in a number of different ways. We do not get into how the achievement results came about. All the tests will do is to measure the results. And if a child reads well, then their parents will know that. If they do not read well, then their parents will find that out. And if their children have been taught with some reading technique, their parents then can go in and talk to the teacher about the fact that it does not seem to be working with their child. That empowers that parent.

So what we are talking about is these very basic skills and measuring results. We are not in any way saying that you have to have been taught reading a certain way. The question is, can you read?

Now, the proposed national tests are tied to the NAEP tests, which of course are out there now; 43 States participate in the State NAEP test to get State results. But the NAEP tests are used with only a sample of students. The NAEP test has very high standards, and it also just measures results. So I think the basic skills focus of the tests and the fact that we are just looking at results and not how the child is taught leaves the curriculum and teaching methods up to the local schools.

DEBATE ON PLACING RESTRICTIONS ON TEST DEVELOPMENT

Senator GREGG. So if there were a proposal to legislate to bar the Department of Education from developing any national test in the area of curriculum that might have some objectivity or some subjectivity to it, such as history or even certain levels of math or science—you are saying that would not bother you because you are basically—you are going to limit this to the very narrow band of purely objective subject matters, such as the first levels of math and the mechanics of reading?

Secretary RILEY. Well, I think it would be a real mistake for the Congress to start saying what could and could not be done. And then you get into the State and local——

Senator GREGG. No; I am talking about what the Department of Education can and cannot do. I am not talking about what could—if some group of nationally affiliated—some affiliated national group that works for the local school districts decides to develop a curriculum-based exam on the recent history curriculum that was put out as a result of the Council on the Humanities' proposal,

which was a curriculum that I think most of us—many of us found to be fairly objectionable, since it failed to mention many of the major figures in American history at the expense of many minor figures—well, highlighting many minor figures in American history—if a group of local schools wanted to base their curriculum on that and then test on that, that is their decision.

My point was, would you have an objection to us barring the Department of Education, the Federal Department of Education, from pursuing development of any testing activity in any area that is not purely objective, so that it would meet the standards that you have just outlined, which is that you are going to just work on an objective system, which is the entry levels of math and the mechanics of reading, so we would not have the issue of Federal control over curriculum?

Secretary RILEY. I do not think that issue applies to this particular matter, because these tests will measure basic skills. I would point out that the previous administration, which was not me, requested significant testing in a number of subjects. I did not go that far. And the President does not go that far. And We simply propose to develop tests to assess the basic skills in reading and math. The revious administration was also involved in setting in motion the history standards, which I do not fault them for, but I, like you, did not agree with them. I thought it emphasized the low points in our history instead of the high points, and that was a mistake.

But I do not think it is good for Congress to start getting into placing limitations on future Secretaries of Education. All we are asking for is national tests in the very basic skills. And I think it is a mistake to start identifying what you can and cannot do in the future.

Senator GREGG. I think you are making my point for me. Because my point is that Congress should not get into this at all, and neither should the Federal Department of Education. It is not the role of the Federal Government to be designing local school curriculum. The local school curriculum is the responsibility of the States.

Secretary RILEY. Absolutely.

Senator GREGG. It is the responsibility of the local community. And the question becomes, for us, whether or not by pursuing it in this manner, with this initial funding coming out of the Federal Government, we are not stepping on the slippery slope of moving down the road of national curriculum. And I think that before we do—so that we can accomplish the goals that you want, which is to have a very narrow testing effort, that we should have some sort of Federal congressional statement that that is what it is going to be before you pursue that course.

And my time is up.

PROHIBITION ON DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONAL CURRICULUM BY EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

Secretary RILEY. Senator, I understand what you are saying. And certainly you have a right to that position. I think that that is not the way to go. I will say this. The Department of Education Organization Act has language saying that it is illegal for us to prescribe a national curriculum. That is very strong language. And, I

think, making sure that is clearly understood by everybody, is very important. And as long as that language is there and you do not toy with it, then the kind of thing you are talking about would not come about.

Senator GREGG. Well, national testing demands a national curriculum to meet the national test. And the question is, what are you going to test? However, is it going to move down the road toward the curriculum?

Senator SPECTER. Thank you very much, Senator Gregg.

We are pleased to have with us Senator Jeffords, who is the chairman of the Senate authorizing committee. We welcome him back here. We regret his decision to move to Finance from Appropriations. He had been a member of this subcommittee. But notwithstanding that background, I welcome you, nonetheless, Senator Jeffords.

Senator JEFFORDS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

BENEFITS OF HAVING WIDE RANGE OF TESTING OPTIONS

I do not have any specific statement to make. I would just briefly state that I believe that it is important for local governments and the States to have available to them options on testing in order to meet their own needs. So I do not see a problem right now with where the Department is going. I do not disagree with Senator Gregg, that it should be narrow, and I think it is narrow. States and local governments need help in being able to determine whether or not they are providing education that is needed and required in the present-day society.

Studies in this area have shown that we are very lacking in reading skills and we are very lacking in the capacity to meet the demands of skills necessary to meet international competition. We are not having adequate math taught in our schools, or seeing the results that are required to be able to meet the competition in the international area. The States and local governments need assistance in being able to determine whether or not they are making progress in these areas.

So, in that regard, after listening to the testimony, I do not find a problem with where we are right now. I would agree with Senator Gregg, that if we get into other areas, or you get into other areas, without specific guidance from Congress, it would be incorrect. But I do not have a problem with the present situation.

Senator SPECTER. Thank you very much, Senator Jeffords.

Thank you very much, Mr. Secretary, for coming this morning. I believe this has been a very, very helpful hearing. It has certainly focused the issues for me. And as I say, we had deferred a vote on the amendment offered by Senator Gregg and Senator Coats yesterday so that we could have this hearing, which we scheduled just yesterday. But I think it is very, very helpful.

So we thank you for coming. We know you have commitments on the House side. Thank you.

Secretary RILEY. Thank you so much.

Senator SPECTER. I would like now to call Chairman William Goodling, Congressman from Pennsylvania, from the York area, a longstanding and good friend of mine personally. Congressman Goodling spoke up on this issue earlier this summer, and we are

very pleased to have him with us to give us his view on the question of Federal funding of these proposed educational tests.

Chairman Goodling, welcome, and the floor is yours.

REMARKS OF REPRESENTATIVE WILLIAM F. GOODLING

Mr. GOODLING. Good, thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am sorry that those that I wanted to educate have left. [Laughter.]

But, nevertheless, I will do my best with getting the message across.

I was very hurt and very disappointed yesterday. The President took time out from his vacation to go to a school and indicate that all of this is political. I am very hurt simply because I spent 45 minutes with the President, one on one, discussing education. I am meeting with the Secretary and in conversation constantly, and nothing we do in the area of education is strictly political.

This has nothing to do with politics. This has to do with the fact that I have spent a great deal of my life as an educator, as a teacher, as a principal, as a superintendent, as a supervisor of student teachers for colleges, as a parent, and as a school board president. That is why I have real problems, not only with the test, but with the way it is being done.

For 20 years—well, at least 15 years in the Congress—I kept telling everyone, do not keep saying, chapter 1 is motherhood, ice cream and apple pie. Do not keep saying that Head Start is motherhood, apple pie, and ice cream. We have many programs out there in which there is no quality whatsoever. And when you ask for more money to do more of the same, all you are doing is disadvantaging the disadvantaged.

Now we have made great strides in the last 5 years in trying to improve the quality of those programs. And we have a lot of good programs out there now. But for 15 years, until Steny Hoyer finally joined with me, I was a voice in the wilderness.

Now, why I am opposed to spending $90 million—yesterday, I saw $100 million—on what I call Smith's folly? I hate to take on the Secretary. He is one of the most decent persons I have ever met, and generally, we see eye to eye. And I do not believe it is his idea in the first place.

Why do I feel so strongly?

We are told that 50 percent of our 16-year-olds do well in mathematics, science, and reading. That means 50 percent do not do well. Who are those 50 percent?

Those 50 percent are the same 50 percent of students and parents who have been told, after every test, every standardized test, every Iowa test, every California test, every classroom test—and they have been told the same thing over and over and over again: Your children are doing poorly, your children are doing poorly. Now, we are going to spend $90 million more to tell them: Your children are doing poorly.

And what these parents are saying, and these children are saying is, do not tell us we are doing poorly one more time, with one more test; tell us, as a matter of fact, what are you going to do to help us so that we can become part of the top 50 percent?

That is the whole argument that we have here. The argument has nothing to do with politics. It is how do you waste $90 million to tell children what they have heard over and over again.

I had a Senator recently tell me, well, we cannot do much with $90 million. Well, let me tell you what we can do for that 50 percent with $90 million. We can do all sorts of reading readiness preschool programs. You can do another 600 family literacy preschool programs. You can do 2,500 pre-first-grade programs, so that the child who leaves kindergarten, who is not mature enough to do first-grade work, who is not reading ready—because we now know most all children can read, but they tell us when they can read—we do not tell them when they can learn to read—we can do all those programs so that they do not fail at the end of first grade.

I told the President when I met with him that his whole program is light specifically in two areas. One is teacher preparation.

You made an excellent statement, Senator Faircloth. Why are we going to ask these people how well they do in algebra in eighth grade if, as a matter of fact, you have not trained the first-, the second-, the third-, the fourth-, the fifth-, the sixth-, and the seventh-grade teacher to get them ready to take a test like that? There is nothing in the program that helps the weakest link we have, which is teacher preparation.

Yesterday, we had before us eight very excellent witnesses. One was a first-grade teacher. The only program she had in preparation to teach reading was, if you can read, you can teach reading. There is not any subject that is more difficult to teach than reading. And every other one of those eight who are involved some way in reading, and in reading research, have said the same thing: There is very little, if any, legitimate teaching of reading going on in preparing teachers, or after they become teachers, to help them to become better teachers of reading.

And so, again, I cannot emphasize enough, we are going to spend $90 million to $100 million to tell children and parents, who have been told 1 million times—now, you talk about urban education—you wait until you see the vote on Friday about urban education and where they come down on this issue. Again, they are saying, please, give us the tools, give us the teachers, give us the preschool readiness programs to help teach children to be reading ready by the time they get to first grade.

Let me mention a few other areas. If you believe that one more national standardized test—one more—we spent all this money on NAEP, we spent all this money on TIMSS—in fact, if you want to read some good news, 22 Illinois school districts joined together to take the TIMSS test. Guess what? They came out No. 1 in science, No. 2 in math. TIMSS is the third international mathematics and science study.

They are doing these things themselves. If we stay out of the road—as a matter of fact, they are making all the reforms that are necessary back in the States. If we stay out of the road and do not dumb down their curriculum and do not dumb down their testing programs, I think they will make it, and so will the children.

But if you believe in one more test—and those who believe in one more test are not the 50 percent that are always being told they are doing poorly—those who believe in it are people like us, who

had those reading readiness advantages as a preschooler, who did not come to first grade totally unprepared. It is those 50 percent we should be concerned about. But it is the 50 percent who have had the advantages that are making the decisions.

So if you believe in the test, what do you do first? Well, the first thing you have to determine is the purpose. Every testing expert will tell you that the purpose has to be very narrowly drawn. You cannot test and have it valid for three, four, or five different things, and three, four, or five different areas.

Well, I have heard the acting assistant secretary say his concern is curricula. How? What does that mean? The Department of Education is going to come up with some curriculum. Is that what the idea is? I do not know.

Senator SPECTER. Congressman Goodling, reluctant as I am to interrupt you, we have to conclude the hearing by 10 a.m. We have government affairs starting. And I would like to leave at least a little time for some dialog, questions and answers.

Mr. GOODLING. OK, let me very quickly then say, first of all, you have to know what your policy is, what it is you are trying to do, and you have to narrowly define that or you cannot do a valid test.

After you have done that, then you have to determine what is it you want to test. Then somebody has to draw up the curriculum in order to know what it is you want to test. Now you know that.

Now the next step, of course, is to prepare the teacher. If you do not prepare the teacher to teach to the new standards, what good is a test? And after you are done with all of that, then you take 3 to 4 years to design a test.

There is not any expert that will tell you that you can do it in 1 year's time. And what I heard this morning was really frightening, because if is really an extension of NAEP, why was it not in the budget when it came up? Why did they not tell us that in February? Why did they not give us legislation in February to make NAEP an individual test?

Why did they get around to NAGB, 4 or 5 months after they put all this together? Why did the people who are under contract, lobby us for 6 months, telling us they were going in the wrong direction?

PREPARED STATEMENT

These are questions that have to be asked. We are talking about $100 million, which will do nothing to help the 50 percent who are doing poorly in this country.

That is a short version of everything I have to say.

[The statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF REPRESENTATIVE BILL GOODLING

Mr. Chairman, it is a pleasure to appear before the subcommittee this morning. I want to thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on national testing.

In developing my views on national testing, I have drawn upon my experience as a former teacher, school administrator, and parent. For many different reasons, which I will get into in a few minutes, I oppose the Administration's proposal for new national tests in reading and math.

Several months ago when the President first announced his testing proposal, I made several observations:

—First, that the proposal represented a significant departure from current education policy;

—Second, that there was no mention in the Department of Education's 1998 budget of the national testing proposal;
—Third, that the Department had not sent a bill to Congress requesting authorization for the testing.
—Fourth, that it was not wise for the Department to try to fast-track its proposal without the input of Congress;
—Fifth, that if there were a consensus on testing or if there were to be testing at all, it should come about only through the normal legislative process.

I would now observe that just last month the Department signed a $13 million 5-year test development contract with one year options to renew. And just yesterday the Department sent a transmittal letter and bill to Congress seeking to turn testing over to the National Assessment Governing Board. On the one hand they send a bill asking Congress to be involved, but on the other, they sign a full 5 year contract with options.

Their whole proposal up to this point has been designed only by Washington bureaucrats at the U.S. Department of Education, Congress has had no role, and few in the outside community have either. This is nothing short of a recipe for disaster, like every other effort over the years on the national, state, and local levels—to impose "top-down" standards and tests without hearing from the parents, teachers, and administrators at the local level who know best.

That is why folks ranging the School Administrators, to groups representing millions of families and parents across the nation, to the FAIRTEST organization, to the NAACP have opposed or expressed strong reservations about proceeding with the President's plan. They recognize this for the folly that it is.

I believe all these things are symptomatic of a deeper issue, and that is the flawed assumption that somehow another test will improve education. It won't. Standardized tests assess performance; they don't generate it. We should put more money into the classroom, not in another test. We should focus on the real problems—reading readiness, inadequate teacher training, and more parental involvement. That's how to improve education.

I agree with many of the comments in your Labor/HHS Subcommittee report. Your report stated "The Committee was highly dismayed to learn of the Department's use of fiscal year 1997 funds to begin a new testing initiative without securing prior approval through the regular appropriations process." I might add "or the normal authorization process." It's both an appropriations issue and an authorization issue. And we will be dealing with the NAEP and NAGB authorization in 1998. That is the proper forum for any discussion of new testing proposals, not through the Department of Education's internal processes.

Let me explain. The Department claims they have the authority to plan, develop and implement the tests. I disagree. The statute on which they rely—the Fund for the Improvement of Education—does not contain any specific and explicit statutory authority for the tests. And the bill that was sent up yesterday does not request such authority. The only thing the bill does is refer the tests to the National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB) to set policy. If the Administration is serious about turning it over to NAGB and the legislative process, then they should revoke or suspend the $13 million test development contract, and let NAGB start from scratch with their own ideas. Start with a clean slate.

I would also note that the legislative history of the Fund for the Improvement of Education once had specific authority for national tests, but it was taken out in the early 1990s. So it is pretty clear Congress did not intend for the statute to be used to justify national testing.

Mr. Chairman, having said all that, I want to quickly give several other reasons why I oppose the Administration's testing proposal. Before doing so, let me clarify one item for the record. I am for high standards. However, standards are the prerogative of states. State and local control is a hallmark of American education and it should stay that way. For example, Virginia has some of the highest standards in the nation, and they have been developed by the state at the grassroots' level. In fact, the American Federation of Teachers has even said they are some of the best standards in the land and a good example for other states to follow.

Since 1993, the Department has actively pushed their Goals 2000 program, which encourages, and provides funds for states to create their own standards and tests. In essence, the Administration has backed decentralized reform. Now with this new test proposal it appears to be backing centralized reform. Why the switch?

Another concern I have is only 7 of 50 states have said they will participate in the tests. If the test is so essential, it would seem that more states would be on board.

Let me also note that new national tests could lead to inappropriate and unfair comparisons of schools and students. For instance, we already know that suburban

students in Upper St. Claire, PA will, in all likelihood, outperform students from center city Pittsburgh. Why? Students from Upper St. Claire have more educational advantages. No reason exists to develop another test to show us the deficiencies of disadvantaged students.

Another issue is new national tests could—and I have carefully selected the word "could"—lead to a national curriculum. In developing new assessments, the tendency is to create a new curriculum to match those assessments. But like new national tests, a national curriculum is something Americans don't want and don't need. Given what happened with the Federally-funded U.S. history standards project, we don't need to engage in any effort that could lead to a national curriculum.

Finally, just to reiterate, we don't need another test to tell us what we already know. Instead of developing new national tests, I would rather send dollars to the classroom, bolster basic academics and increase parental involvement. I want to direct federal resources to family literacy and preschool readiness. And I want to take steps to improve teacher training. Those should be our priorities, not more testing.

Thank you very much.

EDUCATIONAL AREA

Senator SPECTER. Congressman Goodling, thank you very much for coming over today. I hear the intensity of your presentation. I know you feel very strongly about it. Of course, you and I have worked very closely for several decades in government and politics, and I know what an excellent background you bring.

I think it might be of interest to people who are listening to hear just a little of your own personal background as a teacher, beyond your status as a chairman.

Mr. GOODLING. Well, I began teaching in a very rural area, and coaching three sports—free, of course, at that time—and then became a guidance counselor, and saw all of the problems.

Senator SPECTER. How long did you teach, Mr. Chairman?

Mr. GOODLING. Five years as a teacher. And I became a guidance counselor, and saw all of the problems of the 50 percent I am talking about. And then I became a high school principal for 10 years, and then a superintendent of schools. And I have to admit, as a superintendent of schools, I took chapter 1 money, because we did not know what we were supposed to do with it, but we knew we were supposed to spend it, and did not use it very well, until finally, I decided we know which children are going to fail before they get here. We know all about their parents. We know all about their brothers and sisters. Why do not we take that money and go out and begin with preschool work.

Senator SPECTER. So your total time in the educational area, aggregated, was?

Mr. GOODLING. Twenty-two years.

Senator SPECTER. We have set the clock at 3 minutes for this round of questioning, so we can conclude in order to move on to the next round of hearings.

Chairman Goodling, on the central concern about Federal intrusion, if there is a judgment reached that we need tests, would you have an idea as to how we might structure those tests so that it maintains the prerogative of local and State government without having the concern or potential or foot-in-the-door concept of Federal intrusion?

Mr. GOODLING. Well, first of all, I think you have to be very careful when you talk about something that is voluntary. I will guarantee you, when school districts decide to use this test, the 50 percent

who have had the advantages, parents in the next school district will insist that it be used there, and that will go on and on and on. That is devious to say that, well, first of all, the Department was doing this all by themselves.

And you know, a couple of people resigned from their activities, not because they were opposed to national tests, but because they were opposed to the direction. I have a letter here to the President, signed by at least 400 mathematicians, saying that what they are doing is wrong from both ends—the direction they are going—and they are for national tests—but the manner in which they are doing it was totally wrong.

Senator SPECTER. Do you have a way we could get to those national tests without having the Federal role?

Mr. GOODLING. Well, first of all, yes, there is no question NAGB could have done it from the beginning. There was no reason in the world for the Department to be off there by themselves. I tried to tell them over and over again, politically it is stupid. A national test for individuals is the most controversial thing you can talk about in America today. That 80 percent is now down to 53 percent of those who approve it. And you know who the 53 percent are. And it is going down and down.

So, first of all, you have got to get us involved. And when they say they have the privilege, under ESEA, to go ahead, there is nothing that specifically gives them that opportunity. And in the National Statistics Act it is pretty clear what you are not supposed to do in relationship to any individualized test.

So let us slow it down so that they do not make the mistakes. That is all I am asking. Get us involved. It took us, I think, on NAEP—I think it took us something like 3 to 4 years before we ever finalized NAEP. And that was a sampling. Now you are talking about an individual test for all children. And we are going to take 1 year. I do not understand. As I said, politically, it is stupid.

Senator SPECTER. Senator Faircloth.

Senator FAIRCLOTH. Yes; Congressman Goodling, thank you for being here.

I think the fundamental danger in this is—and I have many, many questions about it—but the fundamental danger is the test is going to dictate the curriculum in the schools. So, if you have Federal testing, you are going to be dictating—that test is going to dictate what the schools have to teach in order to pass that test.

Mr. GOODLING. Yes; there is no question about it. There is no reason to test if you, first of all, do not know what it is you are going to test. And then, as I said, you then must prepare the teacher to teach.

Senator FAIRCLOTH. The next question, or statement, is that I have great confidence in Secretary Riley. But there are many, many people in the bowels of the Department of Education. And those that bring influence upon the Department of Education, who I do not trust in any degree, nor do I believe are headed in the right direction for our children and the country, they were the ones that would be influencing the test and, consequently, the curriculum that we teach in this Nation. And I am opposed to that.

Mr. GOODLING. And, as I indicated, I have all these from teachers—300, 400, 500—who believe that it is biased. Because they are

concerned that the people who are involved in putting this together have only one idea about the teaching of math. And they are saying, well, first of all, you cannot have the child tested on their ability to use a calculator. You have to know all about the fundamentals of math. And you cannot have just whole math or fuzzy math. You have to have a broad-based group of people making that decision.

And my fear all along has been that, as I said earlier, why has this been something in the Department only until we made such a fuss; that right before we went on "Face the Nation," the Secretary said, well, I would be willing to have NAGB involved. Well, of course, you will be willing to have NAGB involved. Otherwise, nothing is going to go anywhere if the Department is going to build the test, give the test, make all the decisions about the test.

Your idea about, was not all that outrageous, when you talked about, how do you get some students not to participate because of the tremendous competition now—because that is what some of them want to use it for—they want to use it for competition.

And let me say this to my leader from Pennsylvania. One of their ideas is to compare school districts. You know Upper Saint Clair. I know Upper Saint Clair. Why in the world would I compare Upper Saint Clair with Center City Pittsburgh? Is there any fairness to that?

The parents of Upper Saint Clair all have bachelor's degrees. Most have master's. Many have Ph.D.'s. Why would I do that? It does not make any sense whatsoever.

So your illustration of you may get some who are sick or something, accidentally, so that they do not take the test, it just reminded me of something. I was to become proficient on the firing line when I was in the service. I was so cross-eyed—I still am, but nothing like I was—so if they did not put me on the end of the firing line, there was no way I knew which target I was firing at. And so what they would do is take my helmet and put it on some proficient sharpshooter. But that did not help me when I got to the Pacific—I will guarantee you.

Senator SPECTER. Senator Faircloth, did you have one final question?

Senator FAIRCLOTH. I did. Is this test that they are proposing pass/fail? Is there a proposal that you pass it or you fail?

Mr. GOODLING. Well, they will tell you that it has nothing to do with promotion or lack of promotion; that it is just information for the parent. And again, I have to tell you, that 50 percent have already been told a thousand times their children are not doing well.

Senator FAIRCLOTH. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman.

Senator SPECTER. Senator Jeffords.

Senator JEFFORDS. First of all, I agree 100 percent that if I were to choose where to put the money, I would put it in professional development. I have no question but that you are correct on that. But I do not think that is the issue here, because it is the Department of Education that is making that decision. On the other hand, I do feel that we need to know where we have to go, in terms of math in particular, in order to meet the international competition and equip our people with skills.

The problem we are facing is, of course, social promotion. We might as well come right out and say it. We just push these kids through without giving them the opportunity to really learn how to read, in particular, and do math. So there are a lot of better ways to spend money. I do not argue with you on that. But I do not think that is the issue we have to face here, which is whether we should tell the Department of Education how they spend their money. Rather than telling them, through the budget process, how to do that, we have given them, I think, that flexibility.

Mr. GOODLING. Well, I would respectfully disagree, in that, again, you talk about $1 million, and you talk about 50 percent of the students doing poorly, and you talk about—take the elementary teacher—I said to the Secretary when we were on the TV, why would you wait until fourth grade to determine whether a child is doing poorly in reading? What are you going to do at that point? Very little. It is too late. Why would you wait until eighth grade to find out how a child is doing in math? What are you going to do about it? Very little at that point.

But do you realize—I know you realize—elementary teachers have to teach all subjects. Ask them how many courses they had in mathematics—not the teaching of mathematics—in college. Ask them how many math courses they did not take that were available in high school. So, again, if we do not work at that end, what good does it do to test the child if the teacher is not prepared to do the job that they are going to expect them to do when they set whatever standards they set that somebody is supposed to reach?

Senator JEFFORDS. I know that we are going to work together on title V of the Higher Education Act to try and face the serious problem we have with the lack of professional development. I certainly look forward to working with you on that. I know we agree on that. There is little I disagree with you on, other than whether we have the authority to, or should, limit the Department of Education as far as their testing plans go.

Mr. GOODLING. What I am basically trying to say, I do think we have a responsibility to guide and direct the Department. And when we see something going awry, as I believe it is—because we are putting the cart before the horse—I think they should know that. And with all the suspicion now out there as to who is putting this test together, who has the responsibility to determine how it is done, we should slow the process down so that we can take 3 or 4 years, as every testing expert tells us you need in order to design a valid test. That is all I ask.

Senator SPECTER. Thank you very much, Senator Jeffords.

Chairman Goodling, we are honored to have you here. It is an unusual occurrence when someone like you, who is so well-qualified for the position you hold, being chairman of the Committee on Education in the House of Representatives, with some 22 years of background in the field.

I took your temperature this morning. It was pretty hot, pretty close to 212, the boiling point, as you looked at this issue. And as I had said earlier, we scheduled this hearing very rapidly, because it was apparent the day before yesterday that the issue would be up for a vote. We put the vote over from yesterday so that we could have the benefit of the hearing. Again, it is a somewhat unusual

procedure to be prepared for a vote—almost a violation of legislative principles to have the hearing, et cetera—and be prepared.

We really thank you for coming; it has been very constructive.

Mr. GOODLING. Thank you very much for having me. I feel pretty passionately about the issue.

CONCLUSION OF HEARING

Senator SPECTER. Thank you all very much for being here. That concludes our hearing. The subcommittee will stand in recess, subject to the call of the Chair.

[Whereupon, at 10 a.m., Thursday, September 4, the hearing was concluded, and the subcommittee was recessed, to reconvene subject the call of the Chair.]

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