

STATEMENT BY SENATOR EDWARD M. KENNEDY IN RESPONSE TO SECRETARY SPELLINGS' NCLB PRIORITIES

Washington, D.C. – Today, Senator Edward M. Kennedy released the following statement:

"Much work needs to be done on the No Child Left Behind Act, and I look forward to working with the Secretary and my colleagues in the new Congress to improve and strengthen the law.

Congress must consider new ideas to help strengthen the law and enable schools to move forward more effectively to close the achievement gap. We need to do more to improve teacher quality, empower parents, and ensure that student learning meets globally competitive standards. We also need to ensure that schools get the help they need to improve – not just a label - when they have missed their academic goals. We must modernize our nation's middle and high schools, promote innovation, and provide students with extra help to keep up with rigorous curriculum.

We will look closely at the Administration's ideas with respect to these issues and I am sure there will be areas of agreement. I am disappointed that the Administration has once again proposed siphoning crucial resources from our public schools - already reeling from increased requirements and budget cuts -- for a private school voucher program. I'm also disappointed that the Administration has proposed circumventing state law with respect to worker protections and other issues. We need to focus on how to help public schools improve and not use this reauthorization to push an ideological agenda that detracts from this goal."