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**STATEMENT OF SENATOR EDWARD M. KENNEDY ON RESULTS OF THE
NATION'S REPORT CARD**

WASHINGTON, DC— Senator Edward M. Kennedy, Chairman of the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, released the following statement in response to the report released today by the National Assessment of Educational Progress.

“Today’s good results show there’s a rising tide in America’s schools, but it has yet to lift all boats.

These welcome signs of progress are a tribute to the hard work of teachers, parents and students across the country. But they also remind us that we still have a long way to go before we can say in America that no child is left behind.

Today’s encouraging report should prod us to do even better – to strengthen those aspects of the No Child Left Behind law that are working, to reform those that are not, and to invest adequate resources in the future of our schools.

These results are not just an assessment of our nation’s classrooms, but are a measure of our competitiveness in the global economy and our commitment to the hopes and dreams of the next generation. Just imagine how much more progress we would see today if President Bush had invested in school reform instead of investing in a failed war in Iraq.

We could have solved the teacher shortage crisis, and hired almost two million new teachers needed for the next decade for the cost of just over six months in Iraq.

For the cost of only 49 days in Iraq, we could fully-fund our commitment to leave no child behind this next school year, rather than short-changing this important program as the Administration has done year after year to the tune of 56 billion dollars since its enactment.

These test results show that more students are mastering basic standards in reading and math than ever before, and many more are going far beyond to reach their full potential.

In math, fourth grade students scored 27 points higher than in 1990, and the number of students proficient in that subject tripled over that time. Progress is also encouraging among eighth graders, who scored 18 points higher than in 1990. All states that participated in the NAEP in 1990 and 1992 showed progress in math.

While not as quickly as in math, America's students are still moving in the right direction in reading. Fourth graders posted their highest scores ever on this year's assessment, and more eighth graders reached basic standards in reading than ever before.

As we work to reauthorize the No Child Left Behind law this year, we'll renew our national commitment to confronting and closing the disparities in opportunity and achievement in our schools. We'll make the necessary changes to ensure that the law works well for every student. And we'll explore new ideas and better solutions to strengthen teaching and learning in our classrooms.

Most importantly, we'll fight to provide the funding so often denied to our schools by the Bush Administration. Every child deserves their fair shot at the American dream and a full chance to learn in a great public school."

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