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**STATEMENT OF SENATOR EDWARD M. KENNEDY ON FOURTH YEAR STUDY OF
THE NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND ACT**

Today's report from the Center on Education Policy provides an encouraging review of the progress underway in our schools, but it also highlights how much remains to be done to ensure that no child is left behind. 78% of school districts report that student achievement is improving, and educators are making great strides to use data in the classroom and align what's taught during the school day to high standards. But too many schools report stagnant progress in closing achievement gaps. The Bush Administration has woefully neglected the task of assisting low-performing schools under the law. Equally troubling, schools report diminished instruction in critical subjects to make extra time for reading and math.

Students must learn the basics, but today's global economy demands a 21st century education that leads to a broad set of skills and knowledge. Every student deserves a world-class curriculum, and schools should be given the resources to do more than just the bare minimum. For four years running, this Administration's failed track record on funding the No Child Left Behind Act has been a detriment to students, teachers, and parents across the country. America's future security is dependent on the strength of our public schools. But the Bush Administration's response to that challenge is the weakest budget in the history of the U.S. Department of Education. We're \$55 billion in the hole on the No Child Left Behind Act, and the Administration has no plan to dig us out.

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