

(April 24, 2007) 10,000 TEACHERS, 10 MILLION MINDS SCIENCE AND MATH SCHOLARSHIP ACT

Congressman Lipinski

April 24, 2007

Debate of 10,000 TEACHERS, 10 MILLION MINDS
SCIENCE AND MATH SCHOLARSHIP ACT

I rise today in support of H.R. 362, a bill that is critically important for America's future.

I thank Chairman Gordon for his hard work on this issue of science education and for making H.R. 362 a priority in this Congress. I also thank Representative Hall, ranking member of the committee, for his work on this bill and for his continuing work in a bipartisan manner in this committee to get things done that we need done for America.

Numerous studies have shown that our students are falling behind the international curve on math and science. When I was a college professor, I certainly saw far too many students coming to college unprepared.

Today, we see that America is at a crossroads. The path that we choose will dictate our standing in the world for decades to come. If we continue business as usual, we jeopardize America's competitiveness and the prosperity that we have all come to enjoy.

Instead, we must do all that we can to make sure that Americans are prepared by a world-class math and science education. America's high standard of living depends on this.

That is why H.R. 362 is a vital part of an American innovation agenda that will help to guarantee a continued prosperity in America's future. Right now, many school districts throughout the country are finding it increasingly difficult to find good math and science teachers.

Lyons Township High School Superintendent Dennis Kelly has spoken to me recently about the difficulties that they are having finding these teachers, and I hear this all across my district and all across the country. This bill targets this problem and offers viable solutions to recruiting new teachers, as well as developing and supporting current ones.

H.R. 362 will expand the Noyce Teacher Scholarship Program at the National Science Foundation allowing more universities to be able to host programs for recruiting students into teaching. This is a vital part of our educational system, connecting universities with K-12 education. This will ensure that our children have an abundance of qualified, well-equipped math and science teachers who will prepare them for their future.

I have a special understanding of the impact that teachers have on children's lives, especially when it comes to inspiring students in math and science. In addition to being a former college professor, I am only one of the handful of Members of Congress with a degree in engineering. In addition, my wife has a degree in math, and we often talk about the teachers who have inspired us.

I will always remember my high school physics teacher, Father Fergus, who inspired me to pursue a degree in engineering, and I also will always remember Father Thul who really inspired me in mathematics.

It is vital that we pass this bill and continue to produce these teachers that continue to inspire our children and make our future more secure.