

Latino and ELL Education in the 110th Congress



Presenter:

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Latino and ELL Education in the 110th Congress

- Political Landscape
- Policy Landscape
- Key Issues for Latinos
- Legislative Outlook

Political Landscape

Democrats Divided: “NCLB’s system of accountability and assessment doesn’t work” v. “NCLB is underfunded and imperfect, but it has highlighted the needs of under-served students, particularly ELLs and students with disabilities”

Political Landscape

Republicans Divided: “NCLB is a government intrusion into a state policy arena” v. “NCLB will hold the public schools accountable for using taxpayer dollars”

Political Landscape

“Education groups” v. Civil Rights groups

- Trade associations, academics, and “liberals” believe NCLB has caused schools to provide substandard education services to low-income, minority, and ELL children, e.g. teaching to the test, narrowing the curriculum
- NCLR, MALDEF, and the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights believe NCLB has exposed long-standing inequities in the education of Latinos and ELLs, but that it has flaws which must be addressed

Political Landscape

Area of Agreement: Schools are struggling to adequately serve ELLs

Chairman George Miller (D-CA): “The ELL issue is ‘white hot’”

Conflation with Immigration: “ELLs are immigrant children who showed up at the schoolhouse door this morning”

Political Landscape

Presidential campaign

- No time for votes
- No desire for votes
- Few staff to work with to gain consensus

Policy Landscape

House v. Senate

- The House released a draft bill for comments in September 2007
- The draft tried to balance the need for flexibility with maintaining NCLB's key tenets
- The draft was attacked for providing too much/not enough flexibility and maintaining too much/not enough of NCLB's key tenets
- The Senate has not released a bill

Key Policy Issues for Latinos and ELLs

Challenge: NCLB's accountability system is too rigid and doesn't take into account the special circumstances of ELLs. The House draft:

- Includes "former-LEP" students in the ELL category for three additional years
- Codifies the Department of Education's regulation allowing a one-year exemption from the reading test on recently arrived ELLs

Key Policy Issues for Latinos and ELLs

Challenge: The public schools don't have the tools to accurately assess ELLs. The House draft:

- Includes a “special rule” requiring certain states to develop native-language assessments
- Includes a requirement in the state plan for professional development in the use of accommodations
- Requires the development and use of appropriate ELL assessments two years after the renewed NCLB is effective, with the use of appropriate interim measures for certain ELLs, and with 25% withholding of funds for noncompliance
- Supports the LEP Partnership

Key Policy Issues for Latinos and ELLs

Challenge: Teachers don't have the support to provide ELLs with the instruction they need.

- The House draft provides for additional training in Title II to teachers so that they are better prepared to work with ELLs
- President Bush's budget would increase Title III funding from \$700 million to \$730 million
- The new Higher Education Act includes ELL instructional supports and recognizes ELL instruction as a "shortage area"

Key Policy Issues for Latinos and ELLs

Challenge: Parents of ELLs aren't involved in their children's education. The House draft:

- Contains provisions in Title V clarifying that Parent Information Resource Centers (PIRCs) should work with parents of ELLs and that they may provide translated materials for parents of ELLs
- Includes a new family literacy program targeted specifically at ELLs and their parents
- Strengthens Even Start by adding accountability and evaluation provisions

Key Policy Issues for Latinos and ELLs

Challenge: NCLB doesn't do enough to reduce the Hispanic dropout rate.

- The House and Senate drafts contain language for a Graduation Promise Fund to provide states with resources specifically for increasing graduation rates
- Both drafts would require a uniform graduation rate across states, with disaggregation of graduation rates

Key Policy Issues for Latinos and ELLs

Challenge: NCLB doesn't support dual-language programs. The Senate draft:

- Contains elements of the PRIDE Act, which would provide grants to partnerships of school districts and ECE programs to develop dual-language programs from preschool through grade five

Key Policy Issues for Latinos and ELLs

Challenge: NCLB doesn't take into account the needs of late-entering immigrant students. The Senate draft:

- Provides resources for “early college high school” programs serving ELLs

Legislative Outlook

- Further House action is unlikely
- A Senate bill is imminent, but staff are focused on finalizing the Higher Education Act
- The U.S. Department of Education is expected to take some action on ELL issues, through regulations and other means
- Senate appropriations bills can be vehicles for anti-ELL amendments

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