

U.S. House of Representatives Holds Education Hearing under New Leadership

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The new chairman of the Education and Workforce Committee in the U.S. House of Representatives, John Kline (MN), held one of the first hearings of the 112th Congress. The hearing was on “Education in the Nation: Examining the Challenges and Opportunities Facing America’s Classrooms.” Four witnesses were asked to speak to the members of Congress who sit on the Committee. Unlike the witnesses invited in the past that pushed and prodded the federal government to get involved in every nook and cranny of education, Chairman Kline brought in witnesses that viewed federal involvement with a wary eye.

Lisa Graham Keegan, from [Education Breakthrough Now](#), urged Congress to acknowledge that more and more parents are “choosing another district school out of boundary, a public charter school, a private school, an online school, or simply to homeschool. School choice has gone mainstream.”

Dr. Tony Bennett, from the Indiana Department of Education, told Congress “the best way the federal government can drive improved student performance is by setting high expectations, enforcing strict accountability measures, and allowing states the flexibility to work on behalf of their students...we must fundamentally change the conversation from ‘How do we get more money for education?’ to ‘How do we get more education for our money?’ ”

Andrew Coulson, from the Cato Institute, stated, “The federal government is not empowered by the Constitution to create ... a program on a national level. Indeed, the Constitution delegates to the federal government no national education policy powers, reserving them, under the 10th Amendment, to the states and the people.”

Even Ted Mitchell, from NewSchools Venture Fund, the single witness who deemed federal involvement in education as valuable, tacitly acknowledged the failure of the increasing federal role in education. He said that there should be a “limited and smart role for the federal government in education, focused on continuing and expanding the kind of innovation and reform that is changing lives today in local communities across this country.”

HSLDA thanks Chairman Kline for holding this hearing. We look forward to working with members of Congress who respect local and state governments and do not try to burden the world of education with federal mandates and controls. HSLDA believes that the success of homeschooling shows that parental involvement and local control are the keys to educational success.