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## President's NCLB deal a political move

Bob Kellogg 11/14/2011

States hoping for relief from some of the provisions of No Child Left Behind may be left behind in terms of meeting certain requirements for a waiver.

Holding collaborative meetings with teachers and the community is a requirement that is often overlooked, and it will likely be the reason why 16 of the 39 states applying for a waiver from the government program may not meet the November deadline. Neal McCluskey, associate director of the [Cato Institute's](#) Center for Educational Freedom, says districts are scrambling for waivers because of Congress' failure to reauthorize the measure.

"These waivers will just kick in for states, regardless of what Congress does," he reports. "Most states just want to get out of the No Child Left Behind requirement, and they don't really care how it's done."

Because Congress has been unable to agree on how to fix the program, the Obama administration recently decided to make a deal with states that will free them of NCLB's provisions for two years while they gain flexibility in using a portion of Title I money for underprivileged students. In exchange, the states must agree to move ahead with rigorous college and career standards and adopt teacher and administrator evaluations that are based partly on test scores. The president decided to sidestep lawmakers because he said he was tired of waiting on them to fix the problem.

"But this is mainly about ... the president trying to say, 'I will solve all these problems,'" McCluskey contends. "That's something he intends to run on, by all indication -- saying we have a do-nothing Congress, and I've had to fix everything because they can't get anything done."

Because next year is an election year, the Cato Institute spokesman doubts that Congress will accomplish anything regarding No Child Left Behind.