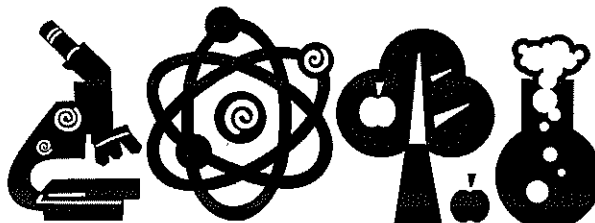




Congress of the United States of America
House of Representatives

Vernon J. Ehlers

Michigan



Ensure Our Students Learn Science
Cosponsor the Science Accountability Act (H.R. 5442)

Dear Colleague:

Please join me and original cosponsors Reps. Holt, Biggert and Boehlert in supporting the Science Accountability Act to ensure that our students learn science and are prepared for the jobs of the future.

The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act requires every state to develop and administer reading, math, and, beginning in the 2007-08 school year, science assessments. Currently, the NCLB Act does not require that the science assessments be used in the accountability system. However, the original intent was to hold states and schools accountable for ensuring students are learning science once the assessments were developed and underway.


President Bush's American Competitiveness Initiative calls for including science assessments in the NCLB Act accountability system. This bill answers the President's call by adding the logical step of holding states and schools accountable for ensuring that students are learning science, starting in the 2008-09 school year.

The National Science Teachers Association (NSTA) and the American Chemical Society (ACS) support the Science Accountability Act. (Please see the NSTA/ACS letter on the reverse side). Including science assessments in the accountability system illustrates the importance of science education and will ensure that students are learning the content knowledge necessary to prepare them for the jobs of the 21st century.

In addition, the Science Accountability Act gradually phases in annual assessments in science. Beginning in the 2007-08 school year, the NCLB Act requires that states measure the proficiency of all students in science at least one time during grades 3-5, 6-9 and 10-12. This bill would require states to annually assess students in grades 3-8 beginning in the 2009-10 school year, matching the requirement for math and reading assessments.

For more information or to cosponsor this legislation, please contact Rachel Post of my staff at 5-3831 or rachel.post@mail.house.gov.

Sincerely,


Vernon J. Ehlers
Member of Congress



May 21, 2006

The Honorable Vernon J. Ehlers
Member of Congress
1714 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20015

Dear Representative Ehlers

On behalf of the National Science Teachers Association (NSTA) and the American Chemical Society (ACS), we would like to thank you for your extraordinary support of STEM education over the years. Thanks to your leadership, STEM education is now a topic of national debate and necessary reforms are in motion that will bolster our nation's continued economic vitality by ensuring our students are prepared for the 21st Century workplace.

NSTA and ACS applaud your latest legislative initiative to ensure that science testing is included in accountability systems. Our organizations support the Science Accountability Act and we look forward to working with your office in moving this legislation forward.

Science assessments are necessary tools for managing and evaluating efforts so that all students receive the science education necessary to successfully prepare them for the future. Including science in the accountability measures will put science on an equal footing with other curriculum areas, highlight areas for improvement in many of our nation's schools, and help to ensure that all learners can succeed academically in science.

We hope that this legislation will spur states to develop quality science assessments that are appropriately aligned with the science curriculum and instruction. These instruments should be designed to accurately assess student understanding of science content, process, and skills, and their ability to think critically and solve problems.

Our organizations are actively promoting high-level student achievement in science, and we believe this legislation is a positive step forward. If we can be of any additional assistance, please contact James Brown of ACS at 202-872-6229 or Jodi Peterson of NSTA at 703-312-9214.

Sincerely,



Dr. Gerald Wheeler
Executive Director
National Science Teachers Association



Dr. E. Ann Nalley
President
American Chemical Society