

CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS

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EDUCATION

The past year has seen a number of important events in educational policymaking. A cabinet-level Department of Education was created, removing the education function from the Department of Health, Education and Welfare. The House passed a major reauthorization of the Higher Education Act.

In July, supporters of a proposed constitutional amendment which would have prohibited the busing of school children beyond their neighborhood schools failed by a wide margin to garner the 2/3 majority necessary in the House for passage of this resolution. The defeat of this measure is viewed as a key victory not only for school desegregation forces, but for the coalition of liberal and moderate Members of the House, as well as the more than 140 national organizations which stood firm in opposition to the proposal.

In other areas, there was success in securing an initial \$3 million appropriation to launch a new program to encourage disadvantaged students to pursue careers in the biomedical sciences and more than \$200 million for a new Title ESEA (Elementary and Secondary Education Act) concentration fund to aid cities' ability to serve low-income students.

However, the Senate cut of \$10 million for the Title III developing institutions program was extremely disappointing. This is a program which provides direct institutional aid to developing institutions under the Higher Education Act. In particular, Title III has provided funds to schools servicing low-income and disadvantaged persons and traditionally Black colleges and universities. The detrimental impact of funding shortages upon the already hard-pressed Black educational institutions will be manifested in further cut-backs in academic programs and extracurricular activities.

The House last year also passed legislation to reauthorize the Higher Education Act, which includes a vast array of programs and services critical to ensuring equality of opportunity in higher education for Blacks. The Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources is reporting its own version of the legislation.

The effort must be made in both the House and Senate to ensure a strong Federal role in providing student access to higher education regardless of economic circumstances and to ensure retention in the schools.

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