

Thursday, September 8, 2011

Washington, D.C. – Congressman Ben Ray Luján of New Mexico’s Third District offered an amendment today to H.R. 2218, the Empowering Parents Through Quality Charter Schools Act, which will improve science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education in charter schools. His amendment passed unanimously. Below are his remarks.

“The United States has the best research facilities and educational institutions in the world, and we continue to be a leader in developing cutting edge technology in fields spanning from renewable energy to medicine. But our nation’s competitiveness depends upon our ability to educate our students and equip them with the skills they need to succeed in the jobs of the future.

“The President, Congressional leadership, and business have all agreed that our nation must do better in order to compete and excel globally in science, technology, engineering and math, or STEM fields. My amendment today simply says that entities include in their application a description of how the school’s program would share best practices between charter schools and other public schools, including best practices in instruction and professional development in STEM education. This amendment supports the identification of best practices and encourages opportunities for teacher training and mentoring in STEM.

“According to the National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. high school seniors recently tested below the international average for 21 countries in mathematics and science. This is simply not acceptable. We must make a commitment to restore science and innovation as keys to a new American economy. We must ensure that America’s students are trained to be innovators, critical thinkers, and problem solvers prepared to become part of the workforce for the 21st century. I urge my colleagues to support my amendment.”

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