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Date: 12/16/99

To: Chuck Brain Brood
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Pages (including cover sheet): 3

Comments: Congressman Roemer asked me to send
you this information on Transition to Teaching.
If you have any questions, please feel free
to give either of us a call.

Thanks for your help!

Maggie

U.S. REPRESENTATIVE

Tim Roemer

NEWS RELEASE

Third Congressional District, Indiana

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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106-73

HOUSE PASSES ROEMER AMENDMENT TO ADDRESS TEACHER SHORTAGE

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The House of Representatives today unanimously approved an amendment offered by U.S. Rep. Tim Roemer designed to help mid-career professionals change careers to become teachers.

Roemer noted that recent studies show that school districts will have to hire two million additional teachers over the next ten years to make up for retirements and a growing student population. Indiana schools also face shortages, and roughly one-fourth of Hoosier math teachers are not fully qualified to instruct that subject.

"Schools throughout the country are struggling to hire new, high quality teachers," said Roemer. "Across northern Indiana school districts -- whether it be LaPorte, Mishawaka, or Goshen -- are striving every year to find and hire qualified teachers. My amendment is designed to help talented Americans of all ages become successful, qualified teachers. The goal is to help these able people obtain a teacher's certification so they can enter the classroom."

Roemer's measure, known as the "Transition to Teaching Act," is modeled after the successful "Troops to Teachers" program which has helped more than 3,000 retired members of the military become math and science teachers in America's schools since 1994. The Roemer measure expands the "Troops to Teachers" concept to include public sector employees and mid-career professionals. The bill enables these potential teachers to receive up to \$5,000 in grants to help them get the teacher training they need.

The Roemer measure was adopted as part of HR 1995, the Teacher Empowerment Act, which authorizes just over two billion dollars annually in federal funding for local school districts to reduce class size and improve the quality of current teachers.

Last year, Roemer helped pass legislation to enhance the quality of teachers by encouraging school districts to recruit and license teachers who come from non-teaching professions but have extensive experience in their field. "This program expands the pool of qualified applicants," noted Roemer. "States and school districts know best the teachers they need. They should have as many options as possible to attract qualified teachers."

TRANSITION TO TEACHING

The Committee includes \$18,000,000 for the Transition to Teaching program which is modeled after the highly successful Troops to Teachers program. The Transition to Teaching program supports competitive projects to recruit middle career professionals to enter the teaching profession, provide up to \$5,000 to cover the costs of obtaining certification to be a teacher, and placement in a high need local educational agency. Individuals who receive assistance agree to teach in a school in a high need local educational agency for three years or reimburse the Secretary a portion of the assistance they received.

A school in a high need local educational agency is defined as an elementary or secondary school in which there is a high percentage of individuals from families below the poverty line (as defined by the Office of Management and Budget and revised annually in accordance with section 673(2) of the Community Services Block Grant Act (42 U.S.C. 9902(2))); a high percentage of secondary school teachers not teaching in the content area in which they were trained to teach; or a high teacher turnover rate.