

There is no doubt that a good, high quality education is the foundation for success. But a good education doesn't start in Washington – it starts at home. Simply put, the education of our children is a dual mission. It is about empowering parents and teachers to provide our students with the best education possible and giving them access to the tools to teach the children in their community with limited involvement from bureaucrats in Washington, DC.

Part of making sure those tools are available starts with ensuring schools have the funding they need to do their job -- something sorely missing in rural America. The federal government must work to assist states and local governments by setting goals and providing funding that will make a high quality education available to all our students. In 2001, Congress passed a major overhaul of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) which was known as the No Child Left Behind Act. As the changes and reforms included in the Act have been implemented over the past several years, we have learned the initiatives that have worked and not worked. As Congress considers the reauthorization of the ESEA, I will continue to focus on quality education for our students in rural Missouri.

It is our job to be sure all our children get a place at life's starting line. I am hopeful we can build on these successes. Only then will our children have the educational foundation they need to meet the challenges and opportunities of the new economy.

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