

# TAPPING AMERICA'S POTENTIAL

## FOUNDING MEMBERS

AeA

Business-Higher Education  
Forum

Business Roundtable

Council on Competitiveness

Information Technology  
Association of America

Information Technology  
Industry Council

Minority Business RoundTable

National Association of  
Manufacturers

National Defense Industrial  
Association

Semiconductor Industry  
Association

Software and Information  
Industry Association

TechNet

Technology CEO Council

Telecommunications Industry  
Association

U.S. Chamber of Commerce

**This letter was also sent to Senator Enzi and Representatives Miller, McKeon, Hinojosa and Keller**

June 8, 2007

The Honorable Edward M. Kennedy  
United State Senate  
317 Russell Senate Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Kennedy:

As members of the "Tapping America's Potential" Coalition (TAP), we are writing to express our support for several key policy priorities related to the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act (HEA).

TAP is a coalition of 16 national business organizations dedicated to improving America's competitive position by supporting policies that will increase the innovation capacity of the United States. TAP is particularly focused on policies that would improve U.S. science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education at all levels. Since 2005, the coalition has been taking action to reach the goal of doubling the number of STEM graduates by 2015. We collectively view the need to address STEM education in the reauthorization of HEA as a national security issue as well as a vital component to addressing America's long-term competitiveness. We urge you and your colleagues to strongly consider the following recommendations as you proceed with the reauthorization process.

### **Align K-12 Education with College and Workplace Expectations**

Provide grants to establish or strengthen existing state-based P-16 councils. Councils would be focused on alignment of K-12, higher education, and workforce systems and provide a venue for addressing pipeline issues and implementing systemic reforms. Councils should be composed of key state stakeholders, including state officials and representatives of the K-12, postsecondary education, and business communities. Council activities should include:

- Aligning K-12 standards, assessments, and curricula with the expectations of postsecondary education and the workforce.
- Aligning teacher preparation/certification with K-12 standards.
- Promoting the adoption and/or improvement by states of high-quality standards and assessments in math and science.

1717 Rhode Island Ave., NW  
Suite 800  
Washington, DC 20036-5610  
T. 202.872.1260  
F. 202.466.3509  
[www.TAP2015.org](http://www.TAP2015.org)

TAP Goal: Double the number of science, technology, engineering and mathematics graduates by 2015.

- Focusing on systemic issues, especially related to the improvement of struggling schools and teacher recruitment.
- Promoting alignment and rigor for all students by supporting secondary school college preparatory programs with outcomes directly tied to college and work readiness, as validated by external examinations (e.g., International Baccalaureate, Advanced Placement, and QualityCore programs).

### **Recruit and Retain High Quality and Effective Math and Science Teachers**

Expand incentives in Title II to attract and retain math and science teachers and strengthen teacher preparation programs by:

- Providing service scholarships to cover the cost of teacher preparation programs for those who commit to teach math and science for a minimum of four years at high-need schools.
- Expanding and restructuring loan forgiveness programs for math and science teachers at high-need schools.
- Employing strategies that provide differential and other compensation-based pay for math and science teachers at high-need schools.
- Aligning teacher preparation programs with states' math and science content standards, assessment, and curricula.
- Coordinating institutional goals for increasing the number of graduates qualified to teach math and science with state-wide and district-wide plans to decrease teacher shortages in high-need subjects and high-need schools.
- Developing teacher preparation programs that lead to a STEM degree and a teacher certification.
- Creating part-time master's degree programs in STEM education for current teachers that augment their content knowledge and pedagogical skills.
- Establishing master's degree programs in teaching for individuals in STEM-related professions to receive a teacher certification.
- Providing greater flexibility in teacher preparation as well as traditional and alternative certification programs (e.g., schedules and curriculum) for individuals with STEM degrees who pursue courses and certification while still employed.
- Recruiting and placing well-qualified individuals to serve as adjunct teachers in secondary school mathematics, science, and critical foreign language courses.

### **Motivate students to study and enter STEM careers**

Create incentives for colleges and universities to produce more STEM graduates by:

- Providing scholarships for students pursuing an undergraduate or graduate STEM degree.
- Encouraging institutions of higher education to develop professional science master's degrees programs. Programs should be designed for college graduates with STEM degrees who intend to pursue careers outside of academia. Industry should partner with college and universities in creating these programs, including supporting program funding.

We thank you for the opportunity to present these proposals. This critical piece of legislation will help keep America competitive in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. We look forward to working with you and members of the Committee on Education and Labor (Health, Education, Labor and Pensions) as HEA moves through the legislative process.

Sincerely,

AeA  
Business Roundtable  
Business-Higher Education Forum  
Council on Competitiveness  
Information Technology Association of America  
Information Technology Industry Council  
Minority Business RoundTable  
National Association of Manufacturers  
National Defense Industrial Association  
National Venture Capital Association  
Semiconductor Industry Association  
Software & Information Industry Association  
TechNet  
Technology CEO Council  
Telecommunications Industry Association  
U.S. Chamber of Commerce