(Washington, DC) – Rep. Rush Holt (NJ-12) last week secured a $5 million increase for the Math and Science Partnership Program, a critical teacher development program within the U.S. Department of Education. The Math and Science Partnership Program is the only national teacher development program available to teachers across the U.S. The funding increase, included in the House Fiscal Year 2010 funding bill for the Department of Education, is the first in two budgets for the program.

“By providing more resources, this program would be able to expand to additional schools across the country, and countless students would benefit from improved instruction in these critical subject areas,” Holt said. “If our economy is going to grow, if our productivity is going to grow, we must do better in math and science education.”

In 2002, prior to the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the program provided $498 million for teacher professional development in science and math. Yet, today the Math and Science Partnership Program is funded at less than half that level at $179 million.

While earlier this year Education Secretary Duncan stated that “science education is central to our broad effort to restore American leadership in Education worldwide,” the Administration’s budget proposal flat-funded the program for another year.

“Math and science skills are essential to preparing our children to make the transition to the workforce,” Holt said. “I hope this funding increase serves as recognition that we cannot be a global economic power unless we make the appropriate investments in education, with special focus on math and science education. We may never know how many students could have benefited over the past seven years from full funding, but I hope that we will soon be able to restore funding to this program to at least its pre-2002 levels.”

Holt’s efforts to increase funding was based on recommendations from the Glenn Commission, on which Holt served, and the National Academies of Science. Additionally, the recently

released report by the Carnegie Corporation of New York and the Institute for Advanced Study entitled “The Opportunity Equation: Transforming Mathematics and Science Education for Citizenship and the Global Economy” called for increasing the “supply of well-prepared teachers of mathematics and science at all grade levels by improving teacher preparation.”

Advocates for the Program praised Holt for his work to increase funding.

“The Math and Science Partnership Program is the only dedicated source of funding at the Department of Education to provide high-quality, sustained professional development resources for K-12 educators teaching in these subjects that are so essential to U.S. competitiveness,” said Tome Lane, President of the American Chemical Society. “The American Chemical Society commends Rep. Holt for his successful campaign to convince his colleagues in the House to provide an additional $5 million funding for this critical education program. Rush Holt has been a tireless champion in delivering real results in Congress to improve science education.”

“The Math and Science Partnerships have demonstrated that we can improve teacher content knowledge and student proficiency in STEM subjects if we apply the latest research and dedicated effort in the areas where it is most needed,” said James Brown, Co-Chair, STEM Education Coalition. “Rep. Holt has been a wonderful advocate for STEM education ever since arriving in Congress and our Coalition truly appreciates his work with the Appropriators to ensure this program will be able to reach more teachers and students with the skills they need to keep our country competitive in the global economy.”

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