

Ms. Evelyn Langlieb Greer, Member

SUBJECT: RESOLUTION SUPPORTING PROPOSED BRAINPOWER BILL

COMMITTEE: INNOVATION, EFFICIENCY & GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

Numerous national organizations, both in the academic and business world, have become increasingly concerned about the declining focus of American students on math and science education. Recently, a bipartisan group of legislators and business leaders have come together to create a proposal to stop the slide and create an initiative that would please business, labor, parents, teachers, students - and be good for the country.

The initiative is a creation by the best scientific minds to keep the United States in the forefront of innovation and technology. The initiative is aimed at assuring this country's competitive position in the new global economy and thereby improving prospects for more American families being able to enjoy comfortable middle-class lives.

The major parts of the plan have emerged in a series of reports from business, academic and government groups - most recently in that of a blue-ribbon panel of the National Academy of Sciences headed by Norman Augustine, the retired CEO of Lockheed Martin (www.nationalacademies.org.) They all recite similar warning signs that America's current healthy economy conceals significant long-term threats to our prosperity. There has been steady erosion in investment in the kind of brainpower that keeps a nation competitive - and a consequent decline in American inventiveness.

Compared to 1970, the percentage of America's gross national product invested by the federal government in physical science research has declined by half. Asia and Europe are graduating thousands more engineering and science majors every year than the United States - and the gap is growing. Almost half of U.S. patents now go to foreign-owned companies and foreign-born inventors. High school students test poorly in math and science Compared to those of our major trading partners.

Looking at these statistics and listening to educators and business executives who offer personal testimony about the difficulty of attracting students to math and engineering or recruiting workers with those skills, a bipartisan group of legislators are beginning to respond.

Amongst other recommendations, the "Brain Power" bill recommends the following steps, which are of specific importance to the Miami-Dade County Public Schools efforts to "raise the bar" on the quality of education in our schools:

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Tackle the talent supply problem: recruit 10,000 future science and math teachers each year and award them four-year college scholarships, with big bonuses to those who teach in underserved schools;

- give additional training to 250,000 current math and science teachers;
- provide large grants to 200 promising young researchers;
- Create an advanced research projects agency in the Department of Energy; provide 25,000 competitive scholarships a year to undergraduates in physical sciences, engineering and math and fund 5,000 new graduate fellowships a year in those fields.
- Make it easier for foreign students in math and science fields to obtain visas for study in the United States and ease their way if they want to remain here to work;

**ACTION PROPOSED BY
MS. EVELYN LANGLIEB GREER:**

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida:

Endorse the concept of the "Brain Power Bill", which requests that the federal government target new funds for a national effort to increase the quality of and focus on math and science education.

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