



COMMISSION ON
NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND

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Statement by Secretary Tommy Thompson and Governor Roy Barnes in Response to U.S. Senate Hearing on Strengthening American Competitiveness for the 21st Century

Washington, DC—Today former Secretary Tommy Thompson and former Governor Roy Barnes, Co-Chairs of the Commission on No Child Left Behind, made the following statement in response to the U. S. Senate hearing on Strengthening American Competitiveness for the 21st Century.

The Commission on No Child Left Behind commends the U.S. Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee for their hearing on Strengthening American Competitiveness for the 21st Century. Too often students are graduating unprepared for college and the workplace. For the last year, the Commission held public hearings and deliberated on the best ways to help all of the nation's children graduate equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in today's global economy.

Bill Gates, Chairman of Microsoft, said in his testimony today, "Whether they are going off to college or into the work force or a combination of the two, it is the responsibility of public education to give our young people the skills, knowledge and preparation for life they need and deserve." He went on to "urge Congress to place an equal focus on standards, measurements and data, and additional support for students and teachers."

Our comprehensive recommendations provide a blueprint for Congress to meet that goal outlined by Mr. Gates. Our report, "Beyond NCLB: Fulfilling the Promise to Our Nation's Children," lays out specific, actionable steps that Congress can take to help all children achieve. These steps include a system of voluntary national standards, additional support and accountability for ensuring that every child is taught by a highly effective teacher, new funding to design and implement high quality data systems, and policies that maximize student options for public school choice and free tutoring services.

It is the hope of the Commission that the Senate will continue to focus on these critical issues during the reauthorization of the No Child Left Behind Act to ensure that we have a high achieving education system that helps all students compete in the global economy.