

Rep. Townsend offered the following resolution:

House Resolution No. 114.

A resolution to memorialize Congress to amend federal No Child Left Behind provisions to allow the test scores of students for whom English is a second language to be excluded from a school district's test results for a certain period of time.

Whereas, The federal No Child Left Behind Act, signed into law by President George W. Bush on January 8, 2002, requires states, districts, and schools to report test data and show that English language learners meet adequate yearly progress. These students have the difficult challenge of mastering a new language while learning subject area content. Schools and districts risk serious consequences if continuous progress is not made by these students toward proficiency in English language arts and mathematics by 2014; and

Whereas, The 1990s brought a greatly increased need for additional language instruction in public schools since more immigrants arrived than in any other single decade prior. The English language learner population continues to grow at significant rates and makes up about 10 percent of the United States public school student population. Some states have experienced a doubling or even quadrupling of the English language learner population in the 10-year period for which the most recent data is available. States have reported more than 460 languages spoken by students with limited English proficiency. The huge numbers and needs of these students pose a unique challenge for educators striving for adequate yearly progress for all student groups and subgroups; and

Whereas, English language learners score lower than their classmates on standardized reading and math tests. The 2003 fourth grade National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) results showed only seven percent of English language learners scored at or above proficient in reading, compared to 30 percent of students overall. The goals of increasing English proficiency and assessing school achievement accurately can be met in a more realistic manner with a limited grace period to reflect competence in subject matter in a fairer and more meaningful way. A transition period of three years, or until English competency can be demonstrated, whichever is first, would make for a more accurate measure of subject matter knowledge and adequate yearly progress; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives, That we memorialize Congress to amend federal No Child Left Behind provisions to allow the test scores of students for whom English is a second language to be excluded from a school district's test results for three years or until a student has achieved a score of at least 50 percent on an English language proficiency test, whichever is first; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, and the members of the Michigan congressional delegation.