

Rothman Joins N.J. Delegation Colleagues to Blast Bush's Proposed Cuts to Vocational & Technical Education & Training Programs

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ROTHMAN JOINS N.J. DELEGATION COLLEAGUES TO BLAST BUSH'S PROPOSED CUTS TO VOCATIONAL & TECHNICAL EDUCATION & TRAINING PROGRAMS

(NEWARK, NJ) - Congressman Steve Rothman (D-NJ-9) joined with fellow New Jersey elected officials and vocational education administrators to express their adamant opposition to draconian cuts to federal funding for vocational and technical education programs proposed by the Bush administration. "It is utterly inconceivable to me that President Bush is proposing to completely zero out federal funding provided by the landmark Perkins Act for vocational and technical educational programs and equipment. If his plan were to be enacted, it would force local property taxpayers in New Jersey to pick up the tab for vocational and educational training programs in the Garden State. I will use my position on the Appropriations Committee to fight this latest example of the President's wrong-headed domestic policy priorities," said Representative Rothman.

"Vocational schools continue to successfully provide the tools and skills for young people who have interests in not only traditional technical professions but also broadcast journalism, graphic design, computer applications, marketing, automotive mechanics, and many others. We have tried to expand education options because we recognize that children have different interests, talents, and strengths. However, the president is proposing to take a significant step backwards by eliminating funding for vocational schools," said Congressman Rothman.

The Bush administration's proposed Fiscal Year 2006 budget would zero out funding for vocational and technical education programs funded by the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act. This would result in the loss of more than \$26 million in Vocational Education State Grants and Tech-Prep Education Grants for New Jersey. Instead, it proposes substituting the untested Federal High School Initiative program for the proven and successful vocational-technical programs with a proven track record of success. The Bush proposal would create a new state block grant system that, under the best scenario, would provide less than half the amount of vocational federal funding New Jersey currently receives.

More than 150,000 vocational and technical students at almost 200 county vocational schools, comprehensive high schools, state agencies and colleges in New Jersey would be affected. Federal and state government vocational school funding has typically been applied toward the purchase of industry-standard equipment, training aids, professional development programs for teachers, instructional salaries for new programs and activities linking secondary and postsecondary programs.

Congressman Rothman was joined at today's event at the Technical Careers Center in Newark by his colleagues in the New Jersey congressional delegation, Congressmen Donald Payne, Rob Andrews, Robert Menendez; Essex County Executive Joe DiVincenzo; Dr. Thomas Bistocchi, President of the New Jersey Council of County Vocational Schools; and vocational and technical school administrators, teachers, and students.