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Ed Department acts upon Rep. Musgraves' school safety scrutiny

Unsafe School Choice Guidelines Revised

Washington, DC: Today, based on congressional action headed Rep. Marilyn Musgrave (CO-04), the U.S. Department of Education announced its revised guidelines to the Unsafe School Choice Option of the No Child Left Behind Act. This option allows students attending "persistently dangerous" schools the opportunity to move to a safer school.

In September 2003, Musgrave held a congressional field hearing in Denver, Colorado, to investigate the definitions of "persistently dangerous schools," as created by state education agencies. This hearing focused on the inaccurate definitions being created around the country and the ability of schools officials to illustrate to parents the safety of their children. Musgrave was joined by Rep. Tom Osborne (NE-03) and former Colorado Congressman Bob Schaffer (CO-04).

"I am encouraged to see the Department of Education took action on the findings of my recent field hearing on school safety and revised these guidelines," said Musgrave. "The increase in parental involvement in determining what constitutes 'persistently dangerous' and keeping unsafe incidents from being reclassified are particularly critical in keeping our children safe in taxpayer funded public schools."

"Parents should not be forced to keep their children in unsafe schools. How can we expect children to learn

if they are in fear for their own safety while on school property? These guidelines give parents more flexible options for transferring their children to safer schools," said Rep. John Boehner (R-OH), chairman of the U.S. House Education & the Workforce Committee. "Rep. Musgrave was instrumental in bringing the Education Reform subcommittee to Denver last fall to study individual states' definitions, and in working with the U.S. Department of Education to produce this guidance."

As a follow up to the September field hearing, Musgrave urged Secretary of Education Rod Paige, in a letter, to provide state education officials greater guidance in implementing the Unsafe School Choice provision. Forty other Members of Congress, including Education Committee Chairman John Boehner, signed this letter.

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Marilyn Musgrave was elected to the United State House of Representative in January 2003, and she represents Colorado's Fourth Congressional District. Musgrave is a member of the House Committees on Agriculture, Education and the Workforce, and Small Business. To learn more about Rep. Musgrave please visit her official website at <http://www.house.gov/musgrave>