



Opening Statement

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION & LABOR

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The Hon. Robert C. "Bobby" Scott • Chairman

Opening Statement of Chairman Gregorio Kilili Sablan (CNMI)

Joint Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education & Subcommittee on Higher Education and Workforce Investment Hearing

Educating our Educators: How Federal Policy Can Better Support Teachers and School Leaders

2175 Rayburn House Office Building

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Today, we are looking at the federal government's responsibility to make sure America's children have the teachers they need.

We can all agree that every child in the United States — from the Marianas to Maine — deserves quality instruction from quality teachers.

Unfortunately for our children, we know that far too many of their most qualified teachers are leaving the profession.

These departures have a serious impact on the quality of education, especially the education of children from low-income families, and especially for children of color.

The Learning Policy Institute reports teacher turnover rates are 50 percent higher in Title I schools, which serve low-income children, than in non-Title I schools. Mathematics and science teacher turnover is nearly 70 percent greater in Title I schools.

Children of color are likewise disproportionately impacted. Turnover rates are 70 percent higher for teachers in schools serving the largest concentrations of children of color. Furthermore, teachers at these schools often have fewer years of experience and are, often, significantly less prepared.

As a nation, we must do better.

We have to understand how we can train teachers better and to understand what forces teachers to leave their profession. Because our children's education is at stake.

We do have some research explaining teacher turnover rates. It shows that teachers are pushed out of their profession because they are not well prepared, because school systems do not support teachers as they should, and because teachers are underpaid.

Insufficient preparation and weak support systems are areas where there may be a federal role. That is why in the last Congress, Committee Democrats introduced the *Aim Higher Act*—a comprehensive reauthorization of federal higher education policy. One goal of the Act is to strengthen preparation programs for teachers.

I am sure there is more we can do.

Which is why I welcome today's witnesses, all educators themselves, for joining us today to share their perspective on these issues.