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**Statement by Edward J. McElroy,
President, American Federation of Teachers,
on the Aspen Institute's Commission on No Child Left Behind**

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The "Highly Qualified and Effective Teachers" recommendation in the commission's report should be a nonstarter for the congressional committees dealing with reauthorization of No Child Left Behind (NCLB).

If we have learned anything in the years since NCLB was enacted, it is that teachers and paraprofessionals working in classrooms are the ones who know best what works and what does not. Our members have had five years of experience with NCLB, and they know now that the law's school accountability mechanism, the "adequate yearly progress" (AYP) formula, is not a useful tool in distinguishing between good schools and schools in need of help. How, then, can we ask teachers to accept another unproven accountability formula when five years of living with NCLB has demonstrated that fundamentally flawed, ideology-driven, top-down proposals don't work?

The AFT also is troubled by several of the report's other recommendations for NCLB, including its failure to call for more support for struggling schools and its lack of a comprehensive fix for AYP.

This report is just one of several from similar commissions and organizations, including the AFT, that have issued recommendations for NCLB's reauthorization. The AFT's recommendations, which resulted from town hall meetings with our members and careful deliberations with the leaders of AFT locals, can be found at <http://www.aft.org/topics/nclb/downloads/LGIRrecommend.pdf>. Such recommendations are a starting point for a discussion in which AFT leaders and members intend to be active and vocal participants.

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The AFT represents 1.3 million pre-K through 12th-grade teachers, paraprofessionals and other school support employees, higher education faculty, nurses and other healthcare workers, and state and local government employees.