

Following the passage of the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act, we confidently expected that amendments proposed by the 90th Congress would not only provide for extension of the act, but at the same time would include substantial increases to complement our Nation's advancing educational needs.

We are distressed by the failure to provide for the increasing need for vocational education, school construction, or teacher salaries. We accept the proposed extension and expansion of the National Teacher Corps program because of the urgency of its need.

The American Federation of Teachers has supported a National Teacher Corps in principle from the very inception of the idea. We did so because it represented the first effort of the U.S. Government to assist in recruiting and encouraging high school graduates to enter the teaching profession.

There are now slightly more than 1,200 Teacher Corps members, gamely proving the value of the Teacher Corps concept. They portray living evidence for the continuation and expansion of this program.

Not only will proposed extension and expansion of the Teacher Corps fulfill neglected educational needs of millions of impoverished children, but, it will additionally stimulate teacher morale and bring dignity to the teaching profession in every segment of our school system.

General teacher shortages are increasing. Most recent figures show that the number of teachers in the United States who do not meet minimum requirements established for certification in their State is actually increasing. In 1965, 81,800 such unqualified teachers were teaching in our schools. However, in September 1966, this number had increased to 8,700 so that 90,500 such teachers are now found in our schools.

Nationwide, this shows that 4.8 percent of the entire teaching staff did not meet State requirements in 1965. Yet, this figure increased to 5.1 percent in the fall of 1966.

During this space and atomic age, America's children deserve competent, highly qualified teachers. We are convinced that extension of the National Teacher Corps as outlined in H.R. 6230 will contribute to this stimulation.

The Teacher Corps embodies two ideals:

First, to encourage high school graduates to consider teaching as a career.

Second, to encourage competent, well-qualified, experienced teachers to enlist in the Teacher Corps.

Much of the success of the Teacher Corps program depends upon the latter. Yet, section 154, article 1, regarding Teacher Corps compensation specifies that:

An experienced teacher who is not leading a teaching team shall be compensated at a rate which is equal to the rate paid by such agency for a teacher with similar training and experience who has been assigned similar teaching duties.

This article mitigates against an experienced teacher moving into a low-paying school district from a district which pays higher salaries.