WASHINGTON D.C. (Today) – Rep Michael Honda (CA-15) recently introduced the Enhancing Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Education Act (E-STEM) of 2009, H.R. 2710, to keep America competitive in the global economy by improving science, technology, engineering and mathematics education. Given that support for E-STEM legislation, first introduced in 2008 with then-Senator Barack Obama, is building within Congress and the Administration, Rep. Honda is hopeful that this bill will pass the House quickly, as the establishment of a coordinating mechanism for federal STEM education programs will be critical to business and industry in the Silicon Valley.

“We need to focus our efforts in teaching the scientists and engineers of tomorrow,” said Rep Honda, a former science teacher and educator of more than 30 years. “Federal agencies unfortunately are not communicating among themselves. Current federal efforts, as well as those of states, in STEM education are neither coordinated, nor coherent, nor cooperative. This bill will create the mechanisms and venue for cooperative relationships to develop.”

Rep. Honda’s legislation establishes a comprehensive approach to improving collaboration, coordination, and coherence of STEM education activities among Federal and State governments across the nation. The bill provides Federal Agencies and states with the infrastructure required to work collaboratively, establish national STEM education goals, to coordinate STEM education initiatives, and to avoid unnecessary duplication among these efforts

“For our nation to remain a leader in scientific advancement and technological innovation, we must strengthen America’s schools,” continued Rep Honda. “This bill provides the education and skills necessary for students to compete in today’s global economy and to understand increasingly complex issues. We must provide them with the resources and curriculum they need to succeed.”

Specifically, Rep. Honda’s bill will:

- Reorganize the President’s Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP). OSTP has a STEM subcommittee that has remained largely dormant over the past few years. The bill would raise that subcommittee to a committee level, giving it a mandate to work proactively at designing coherent STEM strategies.

- Create an Office of STEM at the U.S. Department of Education at the assistant-secretary level. This office will coordinate STEM education initiatives among all federal agencies and have a seat at the OSTP STEM Committee.

- Institute a voluntary Consortium on STEM education. The Consortium would be integrated by no less than five states representing at least five of the nation’s nine geographical regions. Its mission is to develop common content standards for K-12 STEM education, engineered at the state and local levels.

- Create the National STEM Education Research Repository. This would be a clearing house for educators to research the latest innovations in STEM. This will break the silos that keep creative programs from being replicated and will make these resources available through simple internet searches rather than having to sift through convoluted websites.