

WASHINGTON, DC – Today, Representative Michael M. Honda (CA – 15), introduced the Student Privacy Protection Act (formerly H.R. 551, 109th Congress). The measure, an amendment to the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), would direct local educational agencies to release secondary school student information to military recruiters only if a student's parent provides written consent. Currently, parents wishing to keep children's information private must opt-out of NCLB's military recruitment provision; but many school districts have not made parents aware of this option. This measure would ensure that student information remains private unless parents proactively opt-in. The bill will be referred to the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Education and Labor, chaired by Rep. George Miller (CA – 7), an original cosponsor of the legislation.

Honda announced the bill's introduction at a joint press conference with National Education Association (NEA) President Reg Weaver. NEA is the nation's largest professional employee organization, representing 3.2 million elementary and secondary teachers, higher education faculty, school administrators, and other educational professionals.

"The right to privacy is one of America's bedrock principles. No one, particularly our youth, should have to ask for this right," Honda said. "But, as a former high school teacher and principal, I am concerned that parents' and children's privacy is being compromised.

"My constituents brought this matter to my attention expressing frustration that their children were persistently being contacted at home by military recruiters. They wanted to know how the military gained access to their personal contact information without their consent," Honda added, concluding, "I have the greatest respect for Americans who choose to enter the military, as well as for those in the armed forces who engage in the recruiting process. Those efforts, however, should respect the privacy rights of children and their families."

NEA President Weaver stated, "I want to be clear that NEA believes high school students should have open access to information about a wide variety of career opportunities—including the military. But no high school student's records should be released for recruiting purposes against the wishes of the student and his or her family."

The Student Privacy Protection Act has the support of the National Education Association, the National Parent Teacher Association (PTA), 37 Congressional cosponsors and thousands of Americans who have signed on as citizen cosponsors.