

FOCUS

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Congress Passes Science and Mathematics Education Bill

Peter Farnham

On July 25, 1984, the House agreed overwhelmingly to approve the Education for Economic Security Act (S.1285), a massive science and mathematics education bill. S.1285 was approved by the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee in May 1983, but languished at that point until late June 1984, when it was finally passed by the Senate. The House version of the bill, H.R. 1310, passed the House in March 1983.

The long delay in securing Senate approval of the bill was caused by a controversial "equal access" amendment, which allows religious student groups to meet on school property after classes. This amendment was opposed by civil libertarians on grounds that it infringed on the separation of church and state.

Following passage of the bill by the Senate on June 27, Speaker O'Neill, mindful of the controversy, referred the bill to the House Education and Judiciary Committees for their review. Supporters of the amendment interpreted this move as an attempt to "bury" the bill, even though the science and mathematics education portion would have been interred as well.

To force a floor vote and thus avoid consideration by the House committees, Rep. Carl Perkins (D-KY), a supporter of equal access and the chief sponsor of H.R.1310, made use of a little-used parliamentary maneuver called "Calendar Wednesday," which allowed the bill to come directly to the House floor. By a vote of 337 to 77, the House agreed to the equal access provision, and then, by a vote of 393 to 15, approved the science and mathematics education provisions of the bill. Since both houses now agree on the Senate version (redesignated H.R. 1310), the bill does not need to go to conference but goes straight to the President for his signature. He is expected to sign it shortly.

Provisions

The provisions of the bill are contained in four titles. Title I authorizes \$45 million for FY 1984 and \$80 million for FY 1985 for National Science Foundation (NSF) programs, including teacher institutes, materials development, graduate fellowships, undergraduate scholarships, and discre-

tionary projects. Professional societies or associations "in the fields of mathematics, physical or biological sciences, or engineering" may enter into cooperative agreements with NSF, local education agencies, or institutions of higher education to develop 1) teacher training and retraining programs, and 2) instructional programs and materials in science and mathematics.

Title II is primarily a formula grant program administered by the Department of Education, and carries an authorization of \$350 million for FY 1984 and \$400 million for FY 1985. Ninety percent of the funds will be made available to the states; of those funds, 70% will be passed on to local education agencies and 30% to state higher education agencies for programs, principally operated by institutions of higher education, for training new teachers, and retraining and *(continued on page 2)*



The TEAM (Teaching Experiential Applied Mathematics) team celebrates completion of the first three multi-media learning modules for use in college classrooms. From left to right, TEAM members are: Jim Choike, John Jobe, Marvin Keener, and Jeanne Agnew, all from Oklahoma State University. See "Applied Mathematics Multi-media Modules Now Available from the MAA" on page 5 of this issue.