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PAGE Applauds Sen. Casey for Introducing Bill to End Neglect of High-Ability Students

Sen. Robert Casey (D-PA) today introduced bipartisan legislation to end the longstanding neglect of high-ability students, especially those in underserved settings who languish unidentified and unserved.

The Pennsylvania Association for Gifted Education (PAGE) applauds Sen. Casey for his leadership on behalf of all high-ability students and urges all members of Congress, particularly other members of the Pennsylvania Congressional delegation, to cosponsor this legislation.

"Sen. Casey has long recognized that the neglect of gifted students is nothing more than neglect of our nation's future," said PAGE President Judith Mosse, Ph.D. "With students in other nations continuing to outperform U.S. students on international tests, it is critical that during these tough times we prioritize support for our most talented students before it is too late."

The legislation, known as the TALENT (To Aid Gifted and High-Ability Learners by Empowering the Nation's Teachers) Act, will require states and local districts to include gifted and talented and high-potential students in their plans for using federal funding, require states to report on the performance of gifted students on their annual state report cards and help better prepare teachers to work with this special-needs population.

Sponsored by Sen. Casey and Sen. Charles Grassley (R-IA) in the Senate and Representatives Elton Gallegly (R-CA) and Donald Payne (D-NJ) in the House, the TALENT Act will require states and districts to report on the learning progress of high-ability students. It will also require that schools receiving Title I funding – those that serve a high proportion of students from disadvantaged settings – include gifted and talented and high-potential learners in their plans for the federal funds.

One of the greatest tragedies in our education system is the neglect of high-ability students in underserved and disadvantaged settings, both urban and rural. In addition to ensuring that schools incorporate high-ability students in their planning, TALENT takes the critical step to make sure teachers, principals and other school personnel are trained to recognize and serve them appropriately by supporting the development of best practice strategies and helping states and districts get them into the hands of teachers through national dissemination efforts and professional development grants. It will also collect appropriate data on high-ability students to enable policymakers and educators to make informed decisions.