

Legislative Status Report

Engineering Education for Innovation Act (HR 4709/S 3043)

12 May 2010

Background – The Engineering Education for Innovation (E2I) Act was introduced in the 111th Congress on 25 February 2010; in the Senate as S. 3043 by Senator Kirsten Gillebrand (D-NY) and five original co-sponsors, and in the House as H.R. 4079 by Representative Paul Tonko (D-NY) and three co-sponsors. S. 3043 was referred to the Senate Committee on Health, Education Labor and Pensions. H.R. 4709 was referred to the Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary and Secondary Education of the House Committee on Education and Labor.

Purposes – The legislation strengthens pre-college math and science education and boosts technological literacy in America’s elementary and secondary schools by authorizing the Secretary of Education to award planning, implementation and evaluation grants that will enable state educational agencies to introduce engineering design concepts and applications in K-12 classrooms and curricula.

NAE Report – The bill is based on findings of a 2009 National Academy of Engineering report suggesting that the introduction and integration of engineering design concepts, systems thinking and practical applications at an early age can improve student learning and achievement in math and science, increase student interest in engineering education and career opportunities and boost technological literacy among K-12 students.

Supporting Organizations – Prime movers behind the bill include the National Center for Technological Literacy at the Museum of Science in Boston, the International Engineering and Technology Education Association and IEEE-USA. Major corporate supporters include Bechtel, IBM and Intel Corporation.

IEEE-USA Initiatives – IEEE-USA organized a Congressional Fly-In on February 8/9 (*cancelled due to snow storm*) to help mobilize support for the E2I Act prior to its introduction and has since communicated its support for the bill through official letters, Legislative Alerts and visits to key Congressional offices. The IEEE-USA staff is also working closely with their counterparts from the Museum of Science in Boston to recruit additional House and Senate cosponsors.

Outlook – Efforts to add language from the E2I Act to pending Elementary and Secondary Education Act and Competes Act reauthorization bills are also being considered.