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January 2006

Dear Ohio Congressional Representative:

We, the concerned citizens of Lakewood and our surrounding school districts, respectfully submit our plea for your help in regard to the “No Child Left Behind” policy.

As you are aware, Lakewood is a proud, diverse community and we need your approval to allocate more time to adhere to your guidelines within our school system. With your prior support, the Lakewood schools have come so close to achieving an excellent rating. The goal of excellence is in sight, yet we continue to fall short of effectively achieving this excellence for our children. Our Superintendent, Dr. Estrop, has worked tirelessly to adhere to the guidelines you have stipulated for our city.

We have an extremely dedicated Board of Education and staff who are working endless hours to provide our children with the best possible education. We ask that you please support our Board to continue their great work for the community and our children.

Statistics continually show that it is unrealistic to scrutinize and analyze all communities in the same way. We are proud of the City of Lakewood for our diverse population and economic dynamics. Our community embraces this diversity, yet is being compared to communities that are different in size and diversity. Nearly 50% of all districts within our state fall within this category and are slipping into the failing mark because of this diversity.

On behalf of our city’s children, we are asking that you grant our city and our school district administration the opportunity to properly meet the guidelines that you have established that reflect our diversity and population within a timely manner.

Please do not sanction us for being who we are: a diverse, proud, historically rich, and valued community in Northern Ohio. We ask that you do not compare and stereotype us with communities that have a far fewer number of citizens.

By comparing our community with smaller homogenous communities, you are ultimately setting our children up to fail. We truly believe that this policy was originally set up to help our children. Unfortunately, the “No Child Left Behind” policy has seriously deviated from the original framework and you are on the verge of permanently hurting our children.

We desperately urge you, our trusted Congressional Representative, to afford us the critically necessary time to achieve our educational goal of excellence for Lakewood’s children.

Respectfully submitted,

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Concerned Citizen of Lakewood, Ohio

Date