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## **Rep. George Miller (D-Calif.) Statement at the Committee's Organization Meeting for the 112<sup>th</sup> Congress**

*WASHINGTON, D.C. – Below are the prepared remarks of U.S. Rep. George Miller (D-CA), the ranking member of the House Committee on Education and the Workforce for the committee's organizational meeting for the 112<sup>th</sup> Congress.*

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Thank you, Chairman Kline.

I want to begin by congratulating you on your election to the chairmanship of this committee. I look forward to working with you over the next two years as we switch roles. It is my hope that we can continue a collaborative relationship as we tackle issues facing our nation's students and workers.

This committee has seen a great deal of activity during the 110th and 111th Congresses. In fact, the last two Congresses were some of the most productive in this committee's history in terms of helping to grow and strengthen America's middle class.

I anticipate we will see a great deal of legislative and oversight activity under your leadership as well. I don't expect that we will see eye-to-eye on every priority, but I remain hopeful that there are places where we can work to find common ground.

Our work is important because the committee's jurisdiction consists of working families' bread and butter issues – from early childhood, to the classroom, to a career, and to retirement. It is in this committee's jurisdiction where Americans spend most of their lives.

This Congress, I know my priorities and the priorities of my Democratic colleagues will remain the same – to grow and strengthen America's middle class. Therefore, we will evaluate every proposal that comes before us with this initial threshold question: Does it move our nation's middle class forward?

Growing and strengthening the middle class means:

- Improving our schools so that every child has access to an excellent teacher and an education that prepares them to be successful in the 21st century.

- Ensuring the accessibility and the affordability of a higher education.
- It also means creating jobs in this country that are safe, fair-paying, with decent benefits, including access to a secure retirement and quality health care.
- And it means protecting workers' civil and human rights on the job.

On all of these fronts, we made a great deal of progress for our nation's workers over the last four years. And we intend to protect that progress and build upon it together where we can. Growing and strengthening the middle class not just the morally right thing to do, it is in our national interest.

The middle class is the backbone of American democracy and vital to America's prosperity. When we stand on the side of working people – including by making the middle class more accessible for those who aspire to join it – we stand on the side of a strong economy and a strong national future.

We have a big job ahead of us ensuring that the economic recovery is fair, sustainable, and lays the groundwork for a vibrant future.

I welcome all new members to the committee and look forward to introducing our ranking subcommittee members and working with you on these critical issues.

<http://democrats.edworkforce.house.gov>