

May 10, 1995

Contact: Terri Bogert  
(202) 822-9000

**CENTER FOR EDUCATION REFORM CALLS EDUCATION PACKAGE  
IMPERATIVE IN EFFORT TO IMPROVE PENNSYLVANIA SCHOOLS**

(Washington, D. C.) The Center for Education Reform, a national, non-profit, non-partisan clearinghouse for innovative reforms, research and action in public education calls Governor Ridge's comprehensive education reform legislation a "necessary and vital blueprint for change in the effort to improve the quality of education in Pennsylvania."

"This legislation is a positive leap in the direction of parental empowerment over the education of their children. It restores accountability, fosters innovation and provides choice to those who need it most" said Jeanne Allen, President of the Center for Education Reform. "This proposal fundamentally changes the way schools do business, which can only brighten educational opportunities for Pennsylvania schoolchildren."

Governor Ridge's measure calls for a \$38.5 million Educational Opportunity Grant program to allow low-income parents to pick which schools their children attend. These children could then attend public, private or parochial schools outside their school district, as state dollars follow the child. Approximately \$1 million is earmarked for charter schools, allowing teachers and parents to design schools free of red tape, and to make schools accountable to local needs. This proposal also calls for distance learning which greatly increases the educational opportunities for small, poorer rural school districts.

"The time for change is upon us. I agree with the Governor---we only need to ask: is this plan good for kids? The answer is an undeniable YES," Allen said.

#####