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STRAUS CALLS FOR COMMITMENT TO EDUCATION REFORM

Boston: Representative Bill Straus today (D-Mattapoisett) challenged Governor Romney's comments laying blame for underperforming schools at the door of the educators. The remarks came while meeting with students at an "underperforming" school in Holyoke, MA.

Rep. Straus, who is deeply committed to public educational funding, stated that these remarks were rather troubling giving Governor Romney's past performance on educational funding. Straus pointed out that the Governor's 04 budget contained many drastic cuts to education including: \$451,000 from local aid under Chapter 70; \$10 million from Kindergarten Development Grants; \$2.1 million from Early Literacy Programs; \$6.5 million from Special Educational Programs; \$200,000 from the Office of Educational Quality and Accountability; Eliminated Reading Recovery; Eliminated School Breakfast Pilot Program; Eliminated Educational Aid Shortfall Reserve; and Eliminated the innovative program Youthbuild.

In order to avoid such devastating cuts to the public educational system, the Legislature overrode nearly \$30 million dollars in Romney's cuts, restoring funding to these essential K-12 programs and providing our schools with the resources that the high standards of educational reform require.

"I find it troubling that the person who is blaming teachers for students' poor performance, is the same person who cut the essential programs designed to help teachers and students reach the higher standards," stated Straus. "Educational reform is among the most important legislative accomplishments in Massachusetts in the last decade," continued Straus.