

House Republicans' Proposal Would

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House Republicans yesterday outlined for the first time exactly how they intend to put the Department of Education out of business, vowing to hand states total control of \$11 billion of its programs and scatter the rest around the federal government.

Their plan, unveiled by a coalition of House freshmen who have spent the last few months assessing the department, also seeks to repeal Goals 2000, an initiative that has been atop the administration's education agenda.

"The great federal experiment in

education is over," said Rep. Charles Joseph Scarborough (R-Fla.). "It failed. It is time to move on."

Education is one of four Cabinet departments that House Republicans have pledged to eliminate. But the move to abolish is not merely an effort to save money. It is also an attempt to kill much of the federal role in education, which GOP lawmakers contend has grown too large and become too burdensome on local school systems.

The House plan calls for the department to be abolished within a year and for many of its responsibilities—such as overseeing student loans and special education programs—to be trans-

ferred to the Department of Health and Human Services. The Defense, Justice and Interior departments would take over other key functions.

But the chief feature of the proposal is to transform \$11 billion in what the department spends in aid for elementary and secondary schools, as well as colleges, into "no-strings-attached" block grants. The states would then be able to spend the money for any "educational purpose," virtually without any federal regulation.

Most of the money identified for block grants is part of the federal Title I program. Title I targets aid to school districts around the nation that

End Much of Federal Role in Education

have an abundant number of disadvantaged students, in an attempt to have them educated equally as well as students in affluent communities.

Education Department officials denounced every aspect of the House proposal yesterday, saying it would destroy national education programs that both political parties have long considered valid—and not save taxpayers much money.

"It's absurd," said Marshall S. Smith, the department's undersecretary. "These kind of proposals would really end up hurting education, especially for the most needy students in our society. The last thing we need

now is to completely take away the national purpose, and the national voice, for improving schools."

But Republican lawmakers say the move to abolish the department, which was created in 1979, is long overdue. They contend that programs such as Goals 2000, which give states grants to improve academic standards, allows the federal government to meddle too much in the affairs of local schools, which on average receive 6 percent of their budgets from the federal government.

The proposal, which was backed yesterday by House Budget Committee Chairman John R. Kasich (R-

Ohio), also calls for most federal education regulations to be erased and for programs sent to Health and Human Services to cut administrative costs by 30 percent.

Smith said that the department is already taking many steps to curb regulations and spending and argued that bouncing education programs around the government won't accomplish much more. "The purpose of this is purely symbolic and political," he said.

House Republicans, however, insisted that they were ushering in a revolution. "We are sending education back home where it belongs," said Rep. Sam Brownback (R-Kan.).