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Education aid

Thanks should be given to Reps. John Garamendi and Jerry McNerney for supporting the Education For All Act of 2011. This legislation updates the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 to better focus U.S. development aid toward international education.

Helping a country raise its children, especially girls, from illiteracy through at least primary school does more to increase that country's stability and prosperity than any other single aid effort.

As an added bonus, improving education amplifies the effect of all other development strategies and lowers a country's under-5 mortality rate. Children whose mothers cannot read and do basic math perish at higher rates than those with mothers who can.

I'm not aware of any causal relationship between education and national stability, but there is plenty of evidence that indicates a positive relationship. Pakistan, Ethiopia, Afghanistan, Sudan and Uganda are among the 10 countries with the highest under-5 mortality rates in the world.

By supporting the Education For All Act and its call for prudent investments in international education, Garamendi and McNerney may be helping us save hundreds of billions of dollars in future military costs.

Jim Driggers
Concord