
EVERY CHILD ACHIEVES ACT – FOUR BIG CONCERNS

The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights is committed to a reauthorized Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) that preserves the critical federal protections of that law and builds on the lessons of the past to ensure greater academic progress for all students. Although the bipartisan Every Child Achieves Act of 2015 offered by Senators Alexander and Murray is stronger than previous proposals and includes some important protections for students, there are four significant areas of concern which must be addressed.

➤ **Accountability for student outcomes, especially subgroup performance, is not strong enough in the bill. State accountability systems must be required to identify, intervene in, and support schools when all students or groups of students are behind or are not making academic progress.**

- We applaud maintaining the requirement for college and career aligned state standards, statewide annual assessment, disaggregated student achievement (including the 1 percent cap on using alternate assessments based on alternate achievement standards for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities), and goals for achievement and high school graduation.
- Without meaningful accountability systems, however, students can continue to fall behind without any changes made in the school to meet their needs. Our responsibility to support all students, and our stewardship of the significant federal investment, require an expectation of *action*, not just reporting.

➤ **Additional data about groups of students are needed to help us understand how all of our students are doing and what their needs might be.**

- The bill does not require schools to report disaggregated data in a way that can be cross-tabulated by gender and disability status across major racial and ethnic groups. For example, without this cross-tabulation we will not be able to see how African American girls or Latino students with disabilities are doing compared with White girls or Latino students without disabilities.
- The bill also does not require the further disaggregation of groups of students including different groups of Asian American students, pregnant or parenting students, or other groups of vulnerable students.

➤ **The equitable distribution of critical educational resources is foundational to ensuring equal educational opportunity. The bill does not requiring action to address reported disparities.**

- We appreciate that the existing targeting of Title I funds to students, schools, and districts in the greatest need was maintained and that the portability provision was excluded from this bill. We also believe that the new transparency around per-pupil expenditures, school climate and discipline, and access to qualified and effective teachers, principals, and other school leaders will help to identify disparities in educational opportunity.
- The bill does not require states to remedy the often vast disparities between resources available in wealthy school districts and those in poor districts, whether per-pupil

funding, equitable school climates, qualified and effective teachers, early childhood education, rigorous courses, or instructional technology.

- The bill does not close the comparability loophole and ensure that Title I funds are supplemental to an equitable base of state and local funding within school districts.

➤ *The Secretary's role is overly limited in the bill which will undermine the implementation, oversight and enforcement of the law.*

- While there are fewer limitations on the authority of the Secretary of Education than were included in the Chairman's discussion draft, there remains insufficient federal oversight to ensure that the law is faithfully executed as Congress intends.
- The bill does not sufficiently allow the Secretary to adequately review state plans and monitor state actions. Further, it creates excessive hurdles to developing the types of regulations necessary for states, districts and schools to implement the law. Without these authorities, there will be no way to know if policies are being implemented consistent with the law.