

February 25, 2015

The Honorable Robert Scott  
2101 Rayburn House Office Building  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20151

Dear Ranking Member Scott,

On Behalf of the Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD), this letter is to express our sincere gratitude for your leadership and dedication to students with disabilities demonstrated through your development of the substitute bill for the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). We cannot overstate the importance of the substitute bill to the six million students with disabilities attending public schools across the U.S. and their parents.

AUCD is a membership organization that supports and promotes a national network of university-based interdisciplinary programs, including a network of 67 University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD). Many of these centers help train professionals to work with students with disabilities, conduct research to improve instruction for students with disabilities, and provide training, technical assistance and dissemination of the most effective practices to educators, the general public and policy makers.

Your substitute bill includes provisions that continue to high expectations for all students, including those with disabilities. The key provisions we'd like to highlight and specifically thank you for including are:

- Limiting the Alternate Assessment based on Alternate Achievement Standards to 1% of students assessed by grade and by subject;
- Ensuring that parents give consent to and are involved in the decision that their child will be assessed using an alternate standard and be administered an alternate assessment, as well as assure that parents are informed about any effects that taking the alternate assessment may have on their child's academic preparation to earn a regular diploma;
- Ensuring that students who take the Alternate Assessment based on Alternate Achievement Standards are not precluded from attempting to complete the requirements for a regular diploma;
- Prohibiting the development of additional alternate assessments including an alternate assessment on a modified achievement standard;
- Requiring states to set high school graduation rate goals and annual targets for all students and student categories and require support to be provided if one or more categories do not meet annual targets;
- Requiring SEAs and LEAs to report results for all subgroups with a requirement that the "n" size may not exceed 15;
- Requiring SEAs and LEAs to intervene when schools or districts identify achievement gaps between students with disabilities and the general population of students;

The improvements made in recent years are largely due to the requirement that schools include all students with disabilities in their accountability procedures and work to educate all students

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*Executive Director*

to that they are proficient in challenging standards. We will fully support the substitute bill you offered on the House floor when ESEA is debated.

AUCD would also like to thank you for including the Keeping All Students Safe Act in your substitute bill. The use of restraints and seclusion in schools has been found to be extremely harmful to both students and teachers. The use of these practices has resulted in numerous physical injuries, psychological trauma, and sometimes death to children in public and private schools. Restraints and seclusion have no proven educational benefits. Training school personnel to use positive behavior supports and interventions has been shown to reduce or eliminate the perceived necessity of these procedures. In addition, research has also shown huge disparities in the use of these practices on students with disabilities and minority students.

Again, we thank you for your ongoing support and dedication to assure that every student with a disability is included in school and state accountability systems, unlocking the path to success in school and in life. We appreciate your commitment to students with disabilities and will steadfastly support you through the reauthorization of ESEA.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andrew J. Imparato". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "A".

Andrew Imparato  
Executive Director, AUCD