



July 14, 2015

EVERY CHILD'S LEARNING MATTERS

Support the Murphy-Booker-Warren-Coons-Durbin Accountability Amendment #2241 to the Every Child Achieves Act, S.1177

Dear Senator:

On behalf of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights and the 37 undersigned organizations, we write to express our support for the Murphy-Booker-Warren-Coons-Durbin Accountability Amendment #2241 to the Every Child Achieves Act, S.1177, as a step forward in resolving weaknesses with the underlying bill. This amendment makes clearer that when all students or any group of students are struggling in a school, action must be taken. For every child to achieve, their learning must matter in decisions about where and when to intervene and provide supports when students are struggling.

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act, first passed in 1965, came in the midst of the civil rights movement and was a critical component of the war on poverty. Recognizing that students in concentrated poverty, who were disproportionately of color, faced greater barriers to educational success, the law sought to respond to community demands for federal support to high-poverty schools and districts. During the Senate debate 50 years ago, Senator Robert Kennedy implored his colleagues “that we can do something to make sure that we have the highest standards possible and that the money that we are going to expend ... is not wasted but that it is—we are making progress in each one of these communities.” We echo that call—that resources be paired with the expectation of progress for all students—today.

We strongly support maintaining, as the Every Child Achieves Act does, the requirements for college or career aligned state standards, statewide annual assessment, disaggregated student achievement (including the 1 percent cap on using alternate assessments based on alternate achievement standards to assess students with the most significant cognitive disabilities), and goals for achievement and high school graduation. These tools provide invaluable information to parents, communities, educators, advocates, and policymakers to help ensure all students an equitable and excellent education. The power of this reporting, however, is greatly curtailed by the absence of meaningful accountability. **States must be required to identify schools where all students or any group of students are not meeting goals and to intervene in ways that raise achievement for students not meeting state standards. We need accountability for schools where groups of students are not making progress, for the lowest performing schools, and for schools with very low graduation rates.**

We urge you to demonstrate your support for the achievement of every child in every school by voting “yes” on the Murphy-Booker-Warren-Coons-Durbin Accountability Amendment #2241 and to continue pressing for strengthened accountability as the bill moves forward. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Nancy Zirkin, Leadership Conference Executive Vice President, at zirkin@civilrights.org, or Liz King, Leadership Conference Director of Education Policy at king@civilrights.org.

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Sincerely,

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Alliance for Excellent Education
American Association of University Women (AAUW)
American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC)
Association of University Centers on Disabilities
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Children's Defense Fund
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National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities
National Center for Learning Disabilities
National Center for Special Education in Charter Schools (NCSECS)
National Center on Time & Learning
National Council of La Raza (NCLR)
National Disability Rights Network
National Down Syndrome Congress
National Indian Education Association
National Urban League
National Women's Law Center
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Southeast Asia Resource Action Center
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Southern Poverty Law Center
Stand for Children
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Teach Plus
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