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February 24, 2016

The Honorable Lamar Alexander
Chair, Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member, Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

**CONFIRM ACTING SECRETARY JOHN KING
AS U.S. SECRETARY OF EDUCATION**

Dear Chairman Alexander and Ranking Member Murray:

On behalf of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, a coalition charged by its diverse membership of more than 200 national organizations to promote and protect the rights of all persons in the United States, we write to urge your support for the nomination of Acting Secretary John King to be Secretary of Education for the remainder of the Obama administration.

Given the recent enactment of the Every Student Succeeds Act, and the need for active engagement by the Department of Education in the law's implementation, the civil rights community has a deep interest in this nomination. The original Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, which was renamed the Every Student Succeeds Act in its most recent reauthorization, sought to raise achievement for low-income and otherwise disadvantaged children. That intent has carried through to this most recent version of the law and it is critical that the Department of Education is in a position – with the leadership of John King as Secretary – to ensure that that intent is faithfully implemented.

As a former teacher, and school, district, and state leader, Acting Secretary King is well-suited for the role of Secretary and in particular, to facilitate the transition from the No Child Left Behind Act to the new law. For more than two decades, Acting Secretary King has worked on issues affecting underserved communities. He has served as commissioner of education for the state of New York, managing director of one of the largest school networks in the country, and director of curriculum and instruction at a school in Massachusetts. At every stop, Acting Secretary King has worked to close the achievement gap. While Acting Secretary King's experience is impressive, most importantly, we believe Acting Secretary King understands and appreciates the importance of working collaboratively with coalitions like The Leadership Conference, which will be essential as we focus on ensuring ESSA is implemented in a way that provides equity for all students.

We believe Acting Secretary King will serve as an excellent leader for the Department as the agency uses its important and vital role to implement ESSA. Acting Secretary King is well-positioned to ensure that vulnerable students and communities are meaningfully engaged in

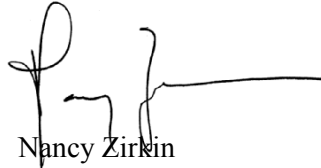


ESSA implementation and that the Office for Civil Rights continues its good work to enforce civil rights laws nationwide. Having his leadership for the remainder of the Obama administration will be invaluable and we urge the Senate to swiftly confirm Acting Secretary King. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Nancy Zirkin at zirkin@civilrights.org or Liz King, Director of Education Policy at king@civilrights.org. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Wade Henderson
President & CEO



Nancy Zirkin
Executive Vice President