



January 30, 2017

## Oppose Confirmation of Betsy DeVos for Secretary of Education

Dear Senator,

On behalf of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights and the 251 organizations listed below, **we urge you to oppose the confirmation of Betsy DeVos to be the next U.S. Secretary of Education.** All parents and students in this country – a majority of whom are of color or are low-income<sup>i</sup> – want the best education, support and dignity for their own children. We stand with them and cannot support a nominee who has demonstrated that she seeks to undermine bedrock American principles of equal opportunity, nondiscrimination and public education itself.

The Secretary of Education's role as an enforcer of education and civil rights laws<sup>ii</sup> is central to advancing our shared vision of an inclusive and diverse system of high-quality public education that enables every student to live up to their potential. DeVos has demonstrated no previous commitment to ensuring equal educational opportunity in schools. Moreover, in her hearing before the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee on January 17, 2017, she failed to demonstrate that she is capable of and committed to enforcing the law – as is required of the agency's chief executive.

**Betsy DeVos' deference to state flexibility, even with regard to compliance with federal civil rights laws such as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA); her claim that demonstrating support for Title IX enforcement guidance would be "premature;" and her lack of support for accountability for all schools receiving federal funds only serve to reinforce our conclusion that her inadequate previous experience and missing record of support for students' civil rights make her unfit to serve as Secretary of Education.**

When compared with Secretaries of Education throughout the history of the department, DeVos' lack of experience stands out. She has never been an educator or worked directly with children and families in public schools. She has never led a school, district or state agency tasked with educating students. She has never been a public school parent or a public school student. This lack of experience makes her uniquely unfamiliar with the challenges and opportunities facing the nation's students, families, educators and schools.

The U.S. Department of Education is responsible for implementing and enforcing laws protecting students from discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex and disability and those laws that provide for educational opportunity from early childhood through graduate school. The person responsible for leading that department must absolutely be committed to enforcing federal laws on behalf of every single student in this country – without regard to LGBTQI status, family income, race, ethnicity, home language, gender, religion, disability or immigration status. Our nation's Constitution, economy, future and children deserve no less.

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Sincerely,

**National (103)**

The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights  
The Advocacy Institute  
African American Ministers In Action (AAMIA)  
All Our Children National Network  
American Association of People with Disabilities  
American Association of University Women (AAUW)  
American Atheists  
American Dance Therapy Association  
The American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)  
American Federation of Teachers  
American Friends Service Committee  
Americans for Democratic Action (ADA)  
Americans for Religious Liberty  
Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance, AFL-CIO (APALA)  
Black Women's Blueprint  
Center for American Progress  
The Center for Civil Rights Remedies at UCLA's Civil Rights Project  
Center for Law and Education  
Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)  
CenterLink: The Community of LGBT Centers  
Champion Women  
Children's Defense Fund  
Clearinghouse on Women's Issues  
Communications Workers of America  
Council of Administrators of Special Education  
CREDO  
Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund  
Disability Rights, Education, Activism, and Mentoring (DREAM)  
Equal Justice Society  
Equal Rights Advocates  
Equality Federation  
Family Equality Council  
Feminist Majority Foundation  
Four Freedoms Forum  
Franciscan Action Network  
GLSEN  
Harriet Tubman Collective  
Healthy Teen Network  
Helping Educate to Advance the Rights of the Deaf (HEARD)  
Hispanic Federation

Immigration Equality Action Fund  
In Our Own Voices, Inc.  
Jewish Women International (JWI)  
Judge David L. Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law  
Know Your IX  
Labor Council for Latin American Advancement  
Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law  
League of United Latin American Citizens  
Learning Disabilities Association of America  
Legal Aid at Work (formerly Legal Aid Society-Employment Law Center)  
MANA, A National Latina Organization  
NAACP  
NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc.  
National Action Network  
National Alliance of Black School Educators  
National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity (NAPE)  
National Alliance to End Sexual Violence  
National Association of Secondary School Principals  
National Association of Social Workers  
National Black Justice Coalition  
National Center for Transgender Equality  
National Coalition Against Domestic Violence  
National Council of Asian Pacific Americans (NCAPA)  
National Council of Gray Panthers Networks  
National Council of Jewish Women  
National Council of La Raza  
National Council on Educating Black Children  
National Council on Independent Living  
National Education Association  
National Employment Law Project  
National Immigration Law Center  
National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health  
National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty  
National Partnership for Women & Families  
National Urban League  
National Women's Law Center  
OCA - Asian Pacific American Advocates  
The Opportunity Institute  
Parent Advocacy Consortium  
Partners for Each and Every Child  
People Demanding Action  
People For the American Way  
PolicyLink  
Poverty & Race Research Action Council

Progressive Congress Action Fund  
Project KnuckleHead  
Roosevelt Institute  
Saving Our Sons & Sisters International  
School Social Work Association of America  
Secular Coalition for America  
Service Employees International Union  
Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SEARAC)  
Southern Poverty Law Center  
Stop Sexual Assault in Schools  
Students Resisting Trump, a project of Students for Education Reform Action Network  
TASH  
Teaching for Change  
The Trevor Project  
United Spinal Association  
Women Enabled International  
Women's Intercultural Network (WIN)  
World Without Genocide at Mitchell Hamline School of Law  
YWCA USA

**State and Local Groups (149)**

ADAPT Montana  
Advocates for Children of New York  
ALSO Youth, Inc  
American Federation of Teachers/North Carolina  
American Samoa Alliance against Domestic and Sexual Violence  
Arizona Coalition to End Sexual and Domestic Violence  
Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families  
Arkansas Coalition Against Sexual Assault  
Bradbury-Sullivan LGBT Community Center  
Brain-Body Health Technology Institute, LLC  
Bright Futures LLC CO  
California Down Syndrome Advocacy Coalition  
California Foundation for Independent Living Centers  
CDCRC Inc.  
Center for Pan Asian Community Services, Inc. (CPACS)  
Chapel Hill-Carrboro Federation of Teachers  
Chesapeake Down Syndrome Association  
Chicago Coalition for the Homeless  
Citizens Against Government Overreach  
Citizens for Educational Awareness  
Citizens for Public Schools  
Coalition for Equal Access for Girls

Collaborative Parent Leadership Action Network  
Colorado Coalition Against Sexual Assault  
Community 4:12  
Community Resources for Independent Living  
Connecticut Alliance of School Social Workers  
Creative Learning Enterprises, Inc.  
Dayle McIntosh Center  
Deb Davis Advocacy  
Decoding DyslexiaMD  
Directions for Youth & Families  
Disability Action Center  
Disability Policy Consortium of Massachusetts  
Education Law Center-PA  
Education Opportunity Network  
Education Rights Network  
Elmhurst Action for a Better Tomorrow  
Faculty Senate, Wheelock College  
Fannie Lou Hamer Center For Change  
Florida Association of School Social Workers  
Florida Council Against Sexual Violence  
Fort Wayne Urban League  
Girls Inc. of Long Island  
Grow Your Own Teachers Illinois  
Gwinnett Parent Coalition to Dismantle the School to Prison Pipeline (Gwinnett STOPP)  
Illinois Association of School Social Workers  
Independent Living Resource Center San Francisco  
Indiana Coalition to End Sexual Assault  
Institute for Women's Studies and Services, MSU Denver  
Iowa Coalition Against Sexual Assault  
Iowa School Social Workers' Association (ISSWA)  
Jane Doe Inc., the Massachusetts Coalition Against Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence  
JF STEM Institute  
Kalamazoo Gay Lesbian Resource Center  
Knoxville Area Urban League  
Latino Engagement and Action Council  
Lesbian Health Initiative (LHI)  
LGBT Center of Raleigh  
Los Angeles LGBT Center  
Los Angeles Urban League  
Loud Voices Together Educational Advocacy Group  
Louisiana Association of Special Education Administrators  
Louisville Urban League  
Made in Durham  
Manhattan, Community Board 2

Maryland Multicultural Coalition/State Chapter of NAME  
Michigan Alliance for Special Education  
Michigan Coalition to End Domestic & Sexual Violence  
Michigan NOW  
Michigan Unitarian Universalist Social Justice Network  
Minneapolis Urban League  
Minnesota Coalition Against Sexual Assault  
Minnesota School Social Workers Association  
Montana Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence  
Mountain State Centers for Independent Living  
National Association of Social Workers, CT Chapter  
NC Coalition Against Sexual Assault  
NCJW Peninsula Section  
Nebraska Coalition to End Sexual and Domestic Violence  
New Jersey Institute for Social Justice  
New York State Coalition Against Sexual Assault  
New York State School Social Work Association  
Nollie Jenkins Family Center, Inc.  
North Carolina Justice Center  
Ohio School Social Work Association  
Open Arms Rape Crisis Center & LGBT+ Services  
OUT in the High Country  
OutReach LGBT Community Center  
Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape  
Placer Independent Resource Services  
Planned Parenthood Keystone  
Public Advocates Inc.  
Quality Education for Every Student  
R.E.A.C.H. (Resources for Educational Advocacy and Classroom Help)  
Resource Center  
Restorative Schools Vision Project (RSVP)  
Rich Educational Consulting, LLC  
Rockland County Pride Center  
Rocky Mountain Victim Law Center  
Ruth Ellis Center  
Sacramento LGBT Community Center  
Sandy Mislow LLC  
SC Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault  
SHK Global Health  
SKIL Resource Center  
Southwest Pennsylvania National Organization for Women  
Student Advocacy Inc.  
Teachers Unite  
The Chicago Urban League

The DC Center for the LGBT Community  
The LGBTQ Center of Long Beach  
The LOFT LGBT Community Services Center  
The Pride Center at Equality Park  
The Urban League of Greater Atlanta  
Tri-County Independent Living  
Urban League of Greater Madison  
Urban League of Hampton Roads, Inc.  
Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence  
Voices for Schools  
Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault  
Women's City Club of New York  
Women's Law Project  
Wominsport  
Youth Justice Coalition  
YWCA Allentown  
YWCA Aurora  
YWCA Binghamton and Broome County, Inc.  
YWCA Bradford  
YWCA Greater Austin  
YWCA Greater Lafayette  
YWCA Greater Portland  
YWCA Kankakee  
YWCA La Crosse  
YWCA Mount Desert Island  
YWCA National Capital Area  
YWCA Northcentral PA  
YWCA of Asheville and WNC  
YWCA of Kaua'i  
YWCA of Rochester and Monroe County  
YWCA of the Greater Capital Region  
YWCA Pierce County  
YWCA Princeton  
YWCA San Antonio  
YWCA South Hampton Roads  
YWCA Spokane  
YWCA Union County  
YWCA Warren  
YWCA Yakima



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<sup>i</sup> See: <http://www.southerneducation.org/Our-Strategies/Research-and-Publications/New-Majority-Diverse-Majority-Report-Series/A-New-Majority-2015-Update-Low-Income-Students-Now>

<sup>ii</sup> Department of Education Organization Act (Public Law 96-88)