



June 18, 2013

**Vote NO on H.R. 5, the “Student Success Act”
Support Greater Achievement for All Students
Vote YES on the Miller Substitute**

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The Honorable John Kline
Chairman
House Education and the Workforce
Committee
2181 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC. 20515

The Honorable George Miller
Ranking Member
House Education and the Workforce
Committee
2181 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC. 20515

Dear Chairman Kline and Ranking Member Miller:

On behalf of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, a coalition of 210 national organizations charged with the promotion and protection of the rights of all persons in the United States, we write in opposition to the “Student Success Act,” H.R. 5, which would amend and reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). This bill would reverse the historic role of the federal government in protecting equal opportunity and access for all students to a quality education. Instead, we urge you to support Ranking Member Miller’s substitute, a far stronger reauthorization of ESEA that supports the achievement of *all* students.

The Leadership Conference believes that the merit of an education bill is determined by its treatment of the most disadvantaged among us and the “Student Success Act” proposes to marginalize underserved communities even further by completely removing the federal focus on the achievement of underprivileged students. Specifically, H.R. 5 eliminates accountability for the achievement and learning gains of subgroups of disadvantaged students who have long struggled against the bigotry of low academic expectations. H.R. 5 also eliminates performance targets; permits federal funds targeted for vulnerable groups of students such as ELLs and Native American students, to be reallocated for other purposes; fails to address school climate issues adequately; and disregards disparities in access to college preparatory coursework and access to higher education. The Student Success Act is an anachronism and would once again allow states to ignore disparities in education for children of color, low-income students, students with disabilities, and ELLs. This would be devastating for these communities and for our nation as a whole; therefore, we strongly urge you to vote against the “Student Success Act,” H.R. 5.

The Miller substitute proposes a strong reauthorization that holds states, districts, and schools accountable for student learning while providing the freedom to adopt innovative and effective reforms and interventions to support the achievement of *all* students. For example, it requires states to adopt Common Core Standards; requires improvement in both overall performance and closing achievement gaps between groups of students; sets



meaningful performance and graduation rate targets; improves school climate by requiring low-achieving schools to reduce their suspension and expulsion rates; creates greater resource equity by closing the state “comparability loophole,” and requires states to address resource inequities; and ensures that state and local education agencies provide struggling schools the supports and interventions they need to improve.

Accessing a high quality education is a fundamental human right and essential to having a 21st Century career that pays a living wage. Chairman Kline’s ESEA reauthorization thwarts greater access to an excellent education and does nothing to remediate racial and socioeconomic inequality in our public schools. We urge you to vote NO on H.R. 5 and instead vote YES on the Miller substitute.

Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to continuing to work with the Committee to improve the achievement and learning conditions of all students.

If you have any questions, please contact Dianne Piché, Senior Counsel at piche@civilrights.org.

Sincerely,



Wade Henderson
President & CEO



Nancy Zirkin
Executive Vice President