

December 2, 2013

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader

The Honorable John Cornyn
Minority Whip

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader

The Honorable Tom Harkin
Chairman, Committee on Health, Education,
Labor & Pensions

The Honorable Richard Durbin
Majority Whip

The Honorable Lamar Alexander
Ranking Member
Committee on Health,
Education, Labor & Pensions

Majority Leader Reid, Minority Leader McConnell, Chairman Harkin, Ranking Member Alexander, and Senators Durbin and Cornyn:

On behalf of 47 national, state, and local organizations committed to children, families, and communities, we urge you to expedite the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) reauthorization process in the Senate.

As organizations advocating and creating opportunities for children and youth, we know that improving our education system is critical to the development and success of our nation's children. Every child deserves a high-quality education that prepares them for college, career, and life, but the current law-No Child Left Behind-has proven to fall short in this regard.

State waivers from the U.S. Department of Education are an inadequate substitute for a reauthorized ESEA that is already seven years overdue. We must show our nation's students, educators, families and communities that we care about our children both as students and as our next generation of leaders. ESEA must be reauthorized.

The reauthorization of ESEA represents an important opportunity for a new vision and approach to public education. In order for our nation's children to compete in the global economy, we must ensure that the reauthorized bill provides targeted and quality supports to the students who need them most, as well as enriching opportunities during and outside the school day to connect students and families with the best of a community's resources and assets. Stronger language to incentivize such school-community partnerships is one important way to strengthen ESEA.

We can all agree that education is a critical priority for our nation. Unfortunately, for too long, children, families and educators have waited for our nation's leaders to act. We urge members of the Senate to come to together and pass a bipartisan commonsense proposal that ensures that all children are on track to graduate college- and career-ready.

Sincerely,

National Organizations

Coalition for Community Schools
American School Counselor Association
CenterLink: The Community of LGBT Centers
First Focus Campaign for Children
Forum for Youth Investment
Futures Without Violence
Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network (GLSEN)
Keshet
National Association of School Psychologists
National PTA
Opportunity Action
Promise Neighborhood Institute at PolicyLink
Rural School and Community Trust
Save the Children
School-Based Health Alliance
United Way Worldwide

State Organizations

Aloha United Way (HI)
Big Brothers Big Sisters Hawaii (HI)
Federation for Community Schools (IL)
Learning Disabilities Association of Hawaii (HI)
Partnership for Children and Youth (CA)
IHS: The Institute for Human Services, Inc. (HI)
United Way of North Carolina (NC)
United Way of Rhode Island (RI)
United Ways of Tennessee (TN)
Youth Development, Inc. (NM)

Local Organizations

Community Schools Collaboration (WA)
Domestic Violence Action Center (HI)
Family League of Baltimore (MD)
Greater Gallatin United Way (MT)
Hawaii Fi-Do Service Dogs (HI)
Hawaii Opera Theatre (HI)
Kent School Services Network (MI)
Malama Learning Center (HI)
Metro United Way (KY)
Pacific Gateway Center (HI)

United Way of Anchorage (AK)
United Way of Central Florida (FL)
United Way of the Greater Lehigh Valley (PA)
United Way of Northeast Florida (FL)
United Way of the Quad Cities Area (IA)
United Way of Southeast Missouri (MO)
United Way of Tarrant County (TX)
United Way of Tucson and Southern Arizona (AZ)
United Way of Westmoreland County (PA)
United Way of York County (PA)
University of Tennessee University-Assisted Community School (TN)