



July 7, 2015

The United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator:

On behalf of millions of educators, parents and students, the undersigned organizations urge you to support the Kirk-Reed-Baldwin-Brown amendment to the Every Child Achieves Act (S. 1177)—the bill to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act—when that bill comes to the Senate floor this week. Your vote is crucial to ensuring that all students exit high school fully prepared for postsecondary success. Any reauthorization of ESEA must address deficits in the resources needed to ensure student success, deficits faced by too many students across the country. The Kirk-Reed-Baldwin-Brown amendment is a strong step toward accomplishing this goal.

Here are two glaring examples of these resource gaps: Nationwide, 1 in 5 high schools lacks a school counselor, and between 10 and 25 percent of high schools offer only one of the core courses in the typical sequences of high school math and science, such as Algebra I and II, geometry, biology, and chemistry. The reality is that many families do not have the resources to provide supplemental tutoring or mental health services to make up for missing counselors or courses. And the importance of ensuring every child has the supports he or she needs to achieve is growing as the percentage of low-income students in the nation’s public schools continues to rise: In 2013, the percentage of public school students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch was 57 percent in the South, 51 percent in the West, 44 percent in the Midwest and 42 percent in the Northeast. Comprehensively addressing the academic and nonacademic challenges students face is the only way to move the nation’s education system forward.

The Every Child Achieves Act increases transparency for a number of key measures of school quality beyond student achievement on statewide assessments, including student access to experienced and skilled educators, rigorous and advanced coursework, career and technical educational opportunities, and safe and healthy school learning environments. The Kirk-Reed-Baldwin-Brown amendment supports these provisions through having states develop detailed plans with school districts to address disparities in access to critical educational resources in these and other key areas.

The Kirk-Reed-Baldwin-Brown amendment will promote a serious focus on reducing resource inequities, something the No Child Left Behind Act largely ignored. On behalf of the nation's students, educators and parents, we ask that you vote YES on the Kirk-Reed-Baldwin-Brown amendment to the Every Child Achieves Act.

Thank you for considering our views.

American Federation of Teachers
American School Counselor Association
ASCD
First Focus
The Leadership Conference
National Association of Elementary School Principals
National Association for Music Education

National Association of School Psychologists
National Association of Secondary School Principals
National Center for Learning Disabilities
National Disability Rights Network
National Education Association
National PTA
School Social Work Association of America