



**CONSORTIUM FOR CITIZENS
WITH DISABILITIES**

February 25, 2015

Dear Representative,

The undersigned organizations of the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD) write to voice our significant concerns regarding *The Student Success Act* (H.R. 5) and to urge you not to support the bill as currently written.

CCD is pleased that since the Committee mark up, some progress has been made to include new language that improves data transparency as well as assuring parents understand the implications of alternate assessments on alternate achievement standards including that students are not precluded from attempting to complete requirements for a regular diploma. We believe that these improvements, in combination with the provisions in HR 5 that we've previously mentioned as positive such as – annual, statewide assessments in grades 3-8 and once in high school; disaggregation of data by student categories; the 95% student participation rate for all students as well as for student subgroups in annual assessments; and the use of universal design for learning principles in assessment design – are all incredibly important. However, in total, the bill just does not go far enough.

As advocates for the six million students with disabilities attending public school across the U.S., CCD strongly urges the House of Representatives to work in a bipartisan fashion to craft legislation that continues to provide meaningful access to rigorous standards for all students and to fully include students with disabilities in every local school. Any bill to reauthorize ESEA must at least include the following:

- 1) Limit the use of Alternate Assessments based on Alternate Achievement Standards to 1% of all students assessed, by grade and by subject;
- 2) Ensure that parents are involved in the decision that their child will take an alternate assessment on an alternate achievement standard;
- 3) Ensure that students with disabilities, including students that take the alternate assessment on alternate achievement standards have continued access to the general education curriculum and are not precluded from earning a regular high school diploma;
- 4) Require states to set performance targets in reading and math and graduation goals and assure that when not met, state and district designed interventions are triggered to support the increased learning for the groups of students not making state-set gains;
- 5) Prohibit the use of restraint and seclusion in non-emergencies that do not threaten physical safety;
- 6) Prohibit the elimination of maintenance of effort provisions.

We hope you will give further consideration to the important provisions that we know will help ensure that students with disabilities are held to high standards and have excellent teachers in settings where they are most likely to succeed. We know you share our goal to see that every student has the opportunity to achieve to high standards and be prepared for post-secondary education and careers.

We would be happy to provide more details on our goals or answer any questions.

Sincerely,

American Association on Health and Disability
ACCSES
American Dance Therapy Association
American Foundation for the Blind
American Network of Community Options and Resources
APSE
Association of University Centers on Disabilities
Autism National Committee
Autistic Self-Advocacy Network
Autism Society of America
Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law
Brain Injury Association of America
Conference of Educational Administrators of Schools and Programs for the Deaf
Council of Parent Attorneys and Advocates
Council for Learning Disabilities
Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund
Easter Seals
Epilepsy Foundation
Higher Education Consortium for Special Education
National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities
National Association of School Psychologists
National Association of State Directors of Special Education
National Association of State Head Injury
National Center for Learning Disabilities
National Council for Independent Living
National Disability Rights Network
National Down Syndrome Congress
National Respite Coalition
Parent 2 Parent USA
Perkins
School Social Work Association of America
TASH
Teacher Education Division of Council for Exceptional Children
The Advocacy Institute
The Arc of the United States
United Cerebral Palsy
United Spinal

The Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities is a coalition of national consumer, advocacy, provider and professional organizations headquartered in Washington, D.C. Since 1973, the CCD has advocated on behalf of people of all ages with physical and mental disabilities and their families. CCD has worked to achieve federal legislation and regulations that assure that the 54 million children and adults with disabilities are fully integrated into the mainstream of society.

For additional information, please contact:

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