

July 15, 2013

Dear Member of Congress:

On behalf of the nation's chief state school officers, the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) is encouraged to see the Student Success Act (H.R. 5) debated in the House of Representatives this week. CCSSO is eager to see swift passage of the Student Success Act in the House, and we hope the Senate will follow suit and pass a companion bill so that leaders from both chambers can come together to agree on a bipartisan path forward for America's schools and children.

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act is woefully outdated and for years has not kept pace with important and innovative education reforms being implemented in the states. The statute, which is six years overdue for reauthorization, must be reauthorized quickly to ensure that Congress supports states as they continue to make progress in preparing all students for college and careers. While the U.S. Department of Education has provided states some relief from No Child Left Behind, the ESEA Flexibility waiver process is not an appropriate long-term approach to federal education policy. States need stability in federal law in order to better plan and implement aggressive statewide education improvements.

We are pleased that the Student Success Act would support the education reforms that states are currently implementing under ESEA Flexibility waivers. The legislation aligns with certain core CCSSO principles for ESEA reauthorization: it requires annual assessments and accountability determinations; continued disaggregation of student achievement data; and public reporting of timely, actionable, and accessible information about student academic achievement.

CCSSO also has concerns with the Student Success Act. Chiefs understand they are responsible for the efficient and appropriate use of tax dollars in their schools, and are not opposed to being held accountable by Congress for using federal education funds effectively to improve student achievement.

CCSSO appreciates the leadership of Chairmen Kline and Rokita to support states' work to improve academic outcomes for students and remove the punitive and unproductive aspects of current law. We are pleased that the Education and the Workforce Committee is responding to state education chiefs' calls to eliminate hurdles they face under current law and provide the supports they need to be successful.

We look forward to continuing to work with Congress on final passage of a bill to reauthorize ESEA, and we encourage you and your staff to contact us if there is anything we can do to support ESEA reauthorization.

Sincerely,



Chris Minnich
Executive Director