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**CAPE member  
organizations:**

Agudath Israel  
of America  
American Montessori  
Society  
Association Montessori  
International—USA  
Association of Christian  
Teachers and Schools  
Association of Christian  
Schools International  
Association of Waldorf  
Schools of N.A.  
Christian Schools  
International  
Council on Educational  
Standards and  
Accountability  
Evangelical Lutheran  
Church in America  
Friends Council  
on Education  
Lutheran Church—  
Missouri Synod  
National Association of  
Episcopal Schools  
National Association of  
Independent Schools  
National Catholic  
Educational Association  
National Christian  
School Association  
Oral Roberts University  
Educational Fellowship  
Seventh-day Adventist  
Board of Education  
United States Conference  
of Catholic Bishops  
Wisconsin Evangelical  
Lutheran Synod Schools  
36 Affiliated State  
Organizations

November 30, 2015

The Honorable Lamar Alexander  
Chairman  
Health, Education, Labor and  
Pensions Committee  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Kline  
Chairman  
Education and the Workforce Committee  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator Alexander and Representative Kline:

With Members of Congress preparing to consider the *Every Student Succeeds Act* (S. 1177), the Council for American Private Education (CAPE) expresses our strongest possible support for the elements within the bill that improve equitable services to students and teachers in religious and independent schools. We urge you and your colleagues in the House and Senate to ensure that these provisions are quickly enacted into law.

Section 1117 of the act, which amends Section 1120 (20 U.S.C. 6320) of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act*, as well as Section 8015, which offers a host of general provisions, including amendments to Section 9501 (20 U.S.C. 7881) of ESEA, together contain important changes that would provide equity, clarity, timeliness, assurances, and overall improvements to the provision of services to private school children and their teachers.

When ESEA was first enacted, Congress determined that federal education aid should be directed in an equitable way toward helping all children in need, regardless of the type of school they attend. That principle of equitably shared funding and services governed the implementation of ESEA from 1965 until its most recent iteration, the *No Child Left Behind Act*, when certain funding formulas and set-asides began to erode equity. Provisions in S. 1171 would help correct those inequities and would strengthen the safeguards designed to ensure equity. These are important developments that have been a long time coming.

By way of background, the Council for American Private Education (CAPE) is a coalition of 19 national organizations (listed left) and 36 state affiliates serving private elementary and secondary schools. There are 31,000 private schools in the United States; one in four of the nation's schools is a private school. About 5.3 million students (10 percent of all PK-12 students) attend them. CAPE member organizations represent about 80 percent of private school enrollment nationwide.

Thank you for the leadership you have shown in bringing this legislation to fruition and in helping to ensure equitable services to students and teachers in religious and independent schools.

Respectfully submitted,



Joe McTighe  
Executive Director