

February 25, 2015

Speaker John Boehner
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Chairman John Kline
Education and the Workforce Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Ranking Member Bobby Scott
Education and the Workforce Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Boehner, Minority Leader Pelosi, Chairman Kline and Ranking Member Scott,

On behalf of AASA, The School Superintendents Association, representing more than 10,000 school administrators across the United States, I write to share our letter of support for the Student Success Act (HR5). Our support for the bill is a complement to our even stronger support for comprehensive ESEA reauthorization and our interest in working with you and your fellow House and Senate colleagues to further improve the legislation as it moves through the House vote and eventual conference revision.

AASA opposed No Child Left Behind since the legislation was introduced, citing the law's federal overreach, punitive measures, assumption that federal government knows best what local schools need, and unworkable mandates and requirements. AASA strongly believes that reauthorization is crucial to providing the nation's schools with relief from current law, which is both broken and lacking in the flexibility states and local school districts need to support student learning and achievement.

This bill is a strong step in the right direction because it restores a more proper balance between federal, state and local government in public education. HR5 takes the pendulum of federal overreach and prescription and places it more squarely in the area of state and local expertise and autonomy. The bill recognizes the importance of empowering state and local leaders to use their professional knowledge and proximal location to make the decisions necessary to successfully adhere to their educational missions. You can read a summary of the aspects of HR 5 that AASA applauds in our [earlier letter](#) to the House Education and the Workforce Committee, dated February 10.

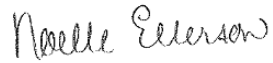
For all that HR5 gets 'right', there are elements of the bill that give AASA pause, and we welcome the opportunity to address these priority issues through the amendment process:

- **Portability:** AASA remains concerned with the bill's public school portability provision. While we will respond separately to the amendments that are passed out of the Rules Committee, please note that any amendment to expand portability to private schools or to otherwise privatize public dollars (ie, vouchers), if adopted, is an absolute deal breaker for the support outlined in this letter. Public dollars must remain in public schools.
- **Maintenance of Effort:** AASA opposes the elimination of state and local maintenance of effort. AASA supports current statute on maintenance of effort language as a way to ensure continuity of state and local efforts.

- Funding: The funding of ESEA programs is something that is ultimately determined by Congressional appropriators. We are concerned that the funding caps included in HR5 are a deep cut to ESEA, cutting funding to more than \$1.5 billion below Fy2010 levels. The very act of a cutting ESEA funding through authorizing statute is in direct opposition to the title of this legislation: student success.

AASA welcomes the opportunity to see ESEA reauthorization move to completion. This reauthorization is a top legislative priority for our members, the nation's public school superintendents. We look forward to further improvements to this bill. Thank you, again, for your continued leadership on this critical matter.

Sincerely,



Noelle Ellerson
Associate Executive Director, Policy & Advocacy

CC: U.S. House of Representatives