



U.S. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Dear Members of the U.S. House of Representatives,

As leaders of the nation’s business, civil rights, and disabilities communities, we support the current requirement for statewide annual assessment in H.R. 5, the Student Success Act. However, we oppose amendment #74 to H.R. 5, offered by Representative Goodlatte of Virginia.

The Goodlatte Amendment would allow school districts to administer their own assessments in lieu of a single, statewide assessment. Locally developed assessments will undermine one of the central tenants of state and local efforts to raise achievement for all students: the ability to have truly comparable data and, as a result, know how all students, in all schools and all communities, fare on a common, objective measure of achievement.

Statewide assessments serve as a check to ensure the students who are the focus of federal law—low-income students, students of color, students with disabilities, and English learners—are not being subject to lower expectations than their peers. They provide parents with critical information for making school choices across district boundaries. They allow educators to benchmark their students’ performance not just against other students in the school or the district, but across the state. And they serve as a cornerstone for statewide accountability systems that expect and support all students to make progress toward college and career readiness.

While the amendment does include language stating that local assessments would continue to provide data that is “comparable” across all districts in the state, in reality, this could lead us down the path of a far more confusing assessment system, which could undermine parent and educator confidence in the results of such assessments. Moreover, the amendment does not require that in a locally designed system, all students within a district must take the same assessment.

We urge you to protect the critical information generated by statewide assessments by voting no on amendment #74.