



U.S. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

March 2, 2017

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader McConnell and Minority Leader Schumer:

Over the past two years, our organizations have worked together — across lines that often divide us on matters of public policy — to secure provisions in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) that we all think are vitally important to our nation’s future, and ensure those provisions are implemented well in the states. Our common goals include:

- State-adopted standards aligned with the demands of postsecondary education and the workforce;
- Annual statewide assessment of all students in grades 3-8 and once again in high school, with a strictly limited exception for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities;
- Transparent, accessible reporting of data — disaggregated by race, income, disability status, and English proficiency — at the state, district, and school levels, so educators, parents, and students themselves have objective information on where they are on their journey to college and career readiness; and
- Statewide accountability systems that include achievement and graduation-rate goals for all groups of students, rate schools in large part on the academic performance of all groups of students, and require action when any group of students consistently underperforms.

The overwhelmingly bipartisan legislation reflects these principles. It grants states broad discretion to design their systems while holding them responsible for working within federal guardrails to design systems that ensure genuine equity and excellence for all students.

Since ESSA’s passage, we have collectively been working in states across the country to equip diverse partners to push for and support the development of state systems focused on equity and

improvement.

One important piece of this process is the adoption of regulations, which provide clarity and certainty on both the key principles of the statute and the processes for implementation.

The U.S. Department of Education finalized those regulations in November. But just as states and state advocates are putting pen to paper on their state plans, you are considering a resolution disapproving of the regulations. This action will cause unnecessary confusion, disrupting the work in states and wasting time that we cannot afford to waste.

Just as we believe the Every Student Succeeds Act incorporates our principles, we believe the regulations do as well. And they provide states with the clarity they need to move forward. We do not support this resolution and **we ask you to vote no on S.J. Res. 25/H.J. Res. 57.**

CC: Members of the U.S. Senate