



U.S. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

JOINT STATEMENT ON THE SENATE'S PASSAGE OF THE EVERY CHILD ACHIEVES ACT

July 16, 2015

Since HELP Committee Chairman Lamar Alexander announced his plans to reauthorize ESEA at the beginning of this year, our organizations have worked together—across lines that often divide us on matters of public policy—to secure provisions in the law that we all think are vitally important to this nation's future. Our common goals include:

- Maintaining the annual assessments in grades 3-8 and once in high school that are so vital to understanding where our children are on their journey toward readiness for postsecondary education and careers;
- Assuring broad transparency in public reporting of data on how all groups of students are progressing on assessments and other measures; and,
- Statewide accountability systems that expect and support all students to graduate from high school ready for college and career, that broaden—albeit judiciously—the measures of student progress, and that require action where any group of students does not make progress against state-set goals.

Thanks to the leadership of Chairman Alexander and Ranking Member Murray, the Every Child Achieves Act contains much of what we have worked for, including statewide annual assessments of all children, with strict limits on alternate assessments for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, and far more transparency around educational opportunities and results than ever before. And we are especially grateful that the Senate rebuffed efforts to weaken assessment participation requirements and honest public reporting.

But as good as the law is at shining a light on opportunity and achievement gaps, it falls woefully short in the more critical task of securing action for the students whose very futures are threatened by those gaps. To keep our nation moving forward, rather than back, that problem must be fixed. As Members of Congress reauthorize federal education laws affecting low income students, students of color, English Learners and students with disabilities, their most sacred responsibility is to improve the law's effectiveness in improving opportunities and outcomes for these students. Without a clear expectation of action, Every Child Achieves does not yet meet that test.