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# Sen. Paul Issues Dear Colleague Letter Urging Deliberation and Transparency on ESEA Reauthorization

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** – Sen. Rand Paul today issued a Dear Colleague letter to Senators Tom Harkin (D-Iowa) and Mike Enzi (R-Wyo.), Chairman and Ranking Member, respectively, of the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee. In that letter, Sen. Paul urged them to slow down the process with which the committee is currently rushing through the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). Below is the text of that letter.

Dear Chairman Harkin and Ranking Member Enzi:

The other day I saw a poster that read, “Congress: Proudly defending the status quo long after the quo has lost its status.” Unfortunately, recent events in the HELP Committee indicate to me that here in the Senate we continue to advance the status quo at the expense of the American taxpayers and our children. Congressional leaders and Committee chairmen continue to push through lengthy, complex bills, and fail to give Senators or their staff ample time to read, analyze, and decipher exactly what the bill does, who it will affect, and what consequences—either intended or unintended—may result from its passage.

Tomorrow in the HELP Committee there is a mark-up scheduled on a ninth reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). The bill is 860 pages long. And just yesterday, we received an 868-page “Managers’ Amendment.” The HELP Committee has not held a single hearing on this bill since I have been here. We have not had enough time to allow the teachers, superintendents, and principals in our states who specialize in educating our children to review this legislation. We have not had time to thoroughly read and review this bill to determine whether it will actually help our children, or whether it will, in fact, make matters worse.

Two days ago, the American Association of School Administrators, the National Association of Elementary School Principals, the National Education Association, the National School Boards

Association, and the National Association of Secondary School Principals sent a letter to the HELP committee regarding this bill. That letter states as follows:

“We . . . hope that the important work of **getting policy right** will not be pushed to the side in a race against the clock . . . we note that the proposed law, while opening a conversation around growth measures, is still heavily reliant on the idea of testing every child, every year through one single high-stakes summative assessment. . . . **We want to emphasize the importance of ensuring that the reauthorization process is both transparent and open, allowing stakeholders to participate without obstacle.** We are concerned by the **closed nature of the amendment process** . . . . We welcome the opportunity to work with you as you **slow the pace** . . . .

I ask my colleagues: Why are you ignoring your constituents—the teachers, principals, school administrators, parents, and children—who are begging you to slow down this process and thoroughly consider their needs and concerns? It’s time to put an end to the status quo, slow down, read the bills, and truly work for the American people, not against them.

I urge the Chairman and Ranking Member to cancel tomorrow’s mark-up and allow everyone concerned the time necessary to read and evaluate this bill.

Sincerely,

Rand Paul, M.D.  
United States Senator