

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Harkin
Chairman
U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions
731 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Michael Enzi
Ranking Member
U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions
379A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Harkin and Ranking Member Enzi:

We commend you for putting forth a comprehensive bipartisan proposal to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). However, we are disappointed that the bill's teacher evaluation provisions have been weakened since the release of the Chairman's mark. We urge you to reconsider including provisions that require all states and school districts to evaluate teacher effectiveness.

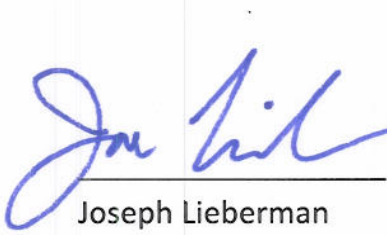
Earlier this year, we introduced a bipartisan bill, the STELLAR Student Act (S. 763), which is intended to ensure that all students are taught by effective teachers and are in schools led by effective principals. Our bill calls on states to develop teacher and principal evaluations that consider both student achievement and classroom observations. Our bill further recommends that these evaluations be used in implementing key personnel decisions including tenure, compensation, promotion and dismissals of teachers and principals.

Initially, we were pleased to see that your reauthorization proposal included a requirement that states and school districts design teacher and principal evaluation systems that are based on multiple measures, including student achievement and observations of classroom instruction. However, the newly revised draft eliminates the teacher evaluation requirement, which we believe is a disservice to our Nation's students. Having an effective teacher in the classroom is critical to learning. It is a more important single influence on student performance than race or socio-economic status, and is the best way to improve student achievement.

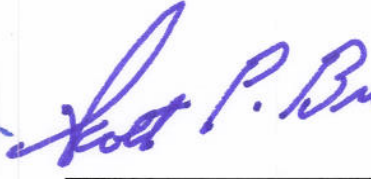
As your bill moves through the Senate, we hope your original teacher evaluation provisions will be reconsidered, and in fact improved so that teacher and principal

evaluations will be used for key personnel decisions, as is recommended in the STELLAR Student Act.

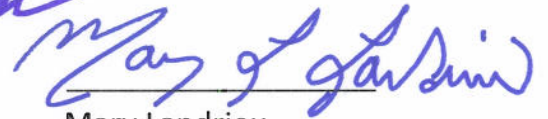
Thank you again for moving this process forward. We look forward to working with you in the months ahead.



Joseph Lieberman
US SENATOR



Scott Brown
US SENATOR



Mary Landrieu
US SENATOR