



September 12, 2013



The Honorable Harry Reid  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Minority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510



The Honorable Richard Durbin  
Majority Whip  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable John Cornyn  
Minority Whip  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510



The Honorable Tom Harkin  
Chairman  
Committee on Health,  
Education, Labor & Pensions  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Lamar Alexander  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Health,  
Education, Labor & Pensions  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510



Majority Leader Reid, Minority Leader McConnell, Chairman Harkin and Senators Durbin, Cornyn and Alexander:

On behalf of organizations representing state and local officials, we write to thank you for recent Senate Committee action on Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) reauthorization legislation and urge you to advance ESEA to the Senate floor.



In July, we were encouraged by passage of an ESEA reauthorization bill in the House of Representatives. We are hopeful that the Senate will pass legislation that builds on the work of the House and ultimately results in a bipartisan reauthorization of ESEA.



State governments, localities and schools need a long-term resolution for the issues raised by the current federal education law, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). More than 12 years after NCLB was enacted, it is time to rewrite the law.



In the absence of ESEA reauthorization, many states have sought flexibility through waivers offered by the U.S. Department of Education. However, waivers will only work for some states. Moreover, waivers only provide temporary relief from specific provisions of the law and often impose new criteria not formally authorized in NCLB or by Congress on states, school districts and schools. Only a full reauthorization of ESEA can support state and local innovation so that every student will be prepared for college or careers.

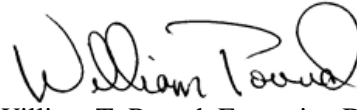


Despite the differences between House and Senate ESEA proposals, we urge each chamber to come together to agree on a common, bipartisan path forward to ensure a world class education for our nation's children. We stand ready to work with you to ensure that every state, district, school and student may benefit from a federal elementary and secondary education law that works.

Sincerely,



Dan Crippen, Executive Director  
National Governors Association




William T. Pound, Executive Director  
National Conference of State Legislatures



David Adkins, CEO and Executive Director  
Council of State Governments



Matthew D. Chase, Executive Director  
National Association of Counties



Clarence E. Anthony, Executive Director  
National League of Cities



Robert J. O'Neil, Executive Director  
International City/County Managers Association



Chris Minnich, Executive Director  
Council of Chief State School Officers



Kristen J. Amundson, CEO and Executive Director  
National Association of State Boards of Education



Thomas J. Gentzel, Executive Director  
National School Boards Association