



February 25, 2015

SUPPORT SCOTT SUBSTITUTE AMENDMENT TO H.R. 5:
PROTECT THE NEEDS OF STUDENTS

Dear Representative:

On behalf of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights and the 24 undersigned organizations, we urge you to support Ranking Member Scott's Substitute Amendment to H.R. 5, the Student Success Act. The substitute maintains important federal protections for our nation's students and is a much needed update to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). The amendment replaces the outdated, rigid mandates of No Child Left Behind, and promotes local and state reforms while maintaining bedrock equity protections for all students.

We believe that the Scott Amendment, unlike H.R. 5, promotes the core American value of equal opportunity in education embodied in *Brown v. Board of Education*. Specifically, the bill promotes accountability for the achievement and learning gains of subgroups of disadvantaged students, who for generations have been harmed by low academic expectations. The amendment requires states to establish accountability systems that set performance, growth, and graduation targets for all students, including subgroups of students (low-income, racial and ethnic groups, English learners, and students with disabilities) to ensure all students graduate college and career ready. It gives states flexibility to judge the performance of schools based on multiple measures of student learning and "equity indicators" of school climate and resource equity, while maintaining an important focus on student growth and academic achievement.

States can do better and the federal government should ensure they do so. Federal funding must be targeted to disadvantaged students and attached to firm, ambitious, and unequivocal demands for improvements in achievement, high school graduation rates, and closing of achievement gaps. We know that states, school districts, and schools seek a new law. However, H.R. 5 guts hard-won gains in the effort to ensure that all students — especially those who need the most help — get a high-quality education.

We urge you to oppose H.R. 5 and support the Scott Amendment. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Liz King, Leadership Conference Senior Policy Analyst and Director of Education Policy at king@civilrights.org or 202-466-0087, or Nancy Zirkin at zirkin@civilrights.org or 202-466-3311. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights
Association of University Centers on Disabilities

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