



FIRST FOCUS

CAMPAIGN FOR CHILDREN

December 2, 2015

Dear Representative:

On behalf of First Focus Campaign for Children (FFCC), I'm writing today regarding the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). FFCC is a bipartisan children's advocacy organization dedicated to making children and families the priority in federal policy and budget decisions, and we urge you to vote for the final passage of the ESSA.

While the final bill is not perfect, the ESSA is a prime example of how strong bipartisan efforts can lead to improved outcomes for children. Under No Child Left Behind, students and teachers were left with constant instability as a result of waivers granted by the Department of Education. The Every Student Succeeds Act will put an end to this patchwork approach and allow states to develop their own accountability measures and interventions to ensure every student is thriving in the classroom.

The bill coming out of conference committee includes key provisions that will boost educational outcomes for students across the country such as collecting data on school climate, authorizing the full service community schools grant program, making it easier for homeless students to receive benefits they are entitled to, and allowing states to create a continuum of the educator profession to ensure every child has excellent educators. The integration of early childhood initiatives with K-12 education under the Preschool Development Grants program will help to ensure that every child enters kindergarten ready to learn. Under ESSA, states will now be required to disaggregate data on student achievement, providing insights into outcomes for low-income students, students of color, students with disabilities, English Language Learners, students in foster care, as well as homeless children and youth.

The Every Student Succeeds Act is certainly a step in the right direction for America's students; however, more can be done to maintain our country's promise of a high-quality public education for all children. FFCC will continue to advocate for educational initiatives that provide resource equity, reduce the burden of standardized testing, and guarantee all students have the highly qualified teachers they deserve.

We look forward to working with you further to improve educational opportunities for every child in this country. If you have any questions please contact Elliott Gluck at ElliottG@firstfocus.org.

Sincerely,

President