

March 20, 2013

The Honorable Judy Chu
United States House of Representatives
1520 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C., 20515

Dear Representative Chu:

On behalf of the nation's 50 million elementary and secondary students, we are pleased to offer our strong support for the Equal Access to Quality Education Act. As organizations concerned with promoting educational quality and equity, particularly for students who have traditionally been least well served by our educational system, we are deeply committed to the development of well-prepared and effective teachers for all communities, and to the equitable distribution of fully prepared and effective teachers. We believe this legislation embodies these goals. It will strengthen the expertise of teachers, allowing them to better serve all students.

This important legislation addresses a critical problem in our nation's school system: chronic shortages and high rates of turnover of fully prepared and qualified teachers in high need areas. To address this imbalance, the bill establishes a voluntary competitive grant program that will strengthen high-quality pathways into the teaching profession, support induction and retention programs, and provide a stable and collaborative long term learning environment for educators and students.

Specifically, this legislation will create partnerships between high need local school districts and institutions of higher education. These partnerships will provide a sustainable way for schools to ensure that traditionally underserved students—low-income students and students of color, English language learners, and students with disabilities—have access to well-prepared and well-supported teachers. To accomplish this, the bill requires teacher-candidates to complete at least one year of residency at a high-need school and teach in a high-need school for at least 3 years after completing their residency. The bill also requires the establishment of induction or retention programs that provide high-quality professional development and opportunities for teachers to extend and deepen their practice.

We applaud your leadership on this legislation which will cultivate a strong vision for 21st century teaching and learning in our nation's schools. We look forward to working with you and your colleagues to pass the Equal Access to Quality Education Act.

Sincerely,

Coalition for Teaching Quality
(Please see list of signatories on the following pages)

National Organizations

Alliance for Multilingual Multicultural Education
American Council on Education
American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education
American Association of People with Disabilities
American Association of State Colleges and Universities
American Council for School Social Work
Association of University Centers on Disabilities
ASPIRA Association
Autistic Self Advocacy Network
Autism National Committee
Center for Teaching Quality
Citizens for Effective Schools
Communities for Excellent Public Schools
Council for Exceptional Children
Council of Parent Attorneys and Advocates
Disability Policy Collaboration, A Partnership of
The Arc and UCP
Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund
Inc
Easter Seals
Education Law Center
FairTest, The National Center for Fair & Open Testing
First Focus Campaign for Children
Gamaliel Foundation
Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU)
Helen Keller National Center
Higher Education Consortium for Special Education
Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law
League of United Latin American Citizens
Learning Disabilities Association of America
Movement Strategy Center
NAACP
National Alliance of Black School Educators
National Association of Elementary School Principals
National Association of School Psychologists
National Association of Secondary School Principals
National Association of State Directors of Special Education
National Center for Learning Disabilities
National Consortium on Deaf-Blindness
National Council for Educating Black Children
National Council of Teachers of English
National Council of Teachers of Mathematics
National Disability Rights Network
National Down Syndrome Congress
National Down Syndrome Society
National Education Association
National Indian Education Association
National Latino Education Research & Policy Project
National Opportunity to Learn Campaign Action Fund
National PTA
National Urban League
Parents Across America
Partnership for 21st Century Skills
Public Advocates Inc.
Public Advocacy for Kids
Rural School and Community Trust
School Social Work Association of America
SEDL

South East Asia Resource Action Center
TASH - Equity, Opportunity, and Inclusion
for People with Disabilities
Teacher Education Division of the Council
for Exceptional Children
TESOL International Association
United Church of Christ Justice & Witness
Ministries

State and Local Organizations

Abbott Leadership Institute – Newark, New Jersey
Action Now – Illinois
Action Now– North Carolina
ACTION United
Alliance of Californians for Community Empowerment (ACCE)
Arkansas Community Organizations
Bay Area Parent Leadership Action Network
Brighton Park Neighborhood Council – Chicago
California Association for Bilingual Education
Californians for Justice
Californians Together
California Latino School Boards Association
Campaign for Quality Education
Center for the Future of Teaching and Learning Coalition for Educational Justice
Delawareans for Social and Economic Justice
Educate Our State
Grow Your Own Illinois
Inner City Struggle
Justice Matters
Legal Advocates for Children and Youth
Montgomery County Education Forum
Parent-U-Turn
Parents for Unity
RYSE Center
San Francisco Teacher Residency
Texas Association of Chicanos in Higher Education
Young Voices-Providence, Rhode Island
Youth On Board – Somerville, Massachusetts
Youth Together