



FIRST FOCUS

CAMPAIGN FOR CHILDREN

July 16, 2015

Dear Senator:

On behalf of First Focus Campaign for Children (FFCC), I'm writing today regarding the **Every Child Achieves Act (ECAA)**. 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 final passage of the ECAA**.

We are encouraged to see the bipartisan work in the Senate on reauthorizing No Child Left Behind, as reauthorization is long overdue and these efforts reflect a desire from both Democrats and Republicans to improve educational opportunities for children. While the ECAA is far from a perfect education bill, if passed it is a significant improvement over current law with a patchwork of waivers with policies dictated by the Department of Education that go far beyond statute.

The ECAA includes a number of provisions that contribute to positive educational outcomes, such as integrating early childhood initiatives with K-12 education, collecting data on school climate, allowing states to use Title IV funds for resource coordinators, 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 ECAA also does not include the worst provisions in the House-passed reauthorization bill, such as flat-funding authorized appropriations and Title I portability.

Still, the bill can be improved further in conference to better address educational challenges facing children across the country. For example, despite a majority vote in the Senate, Senator Franken's Student Non-Discrimination Amendment failed to reach the 60-vote threshold required for passage. This amendment has overwhelming bipartisan support and should be included in the conference bill to ensure all students are protected from bullying. The conference bill should also increased authorized appropriations, set a federal minimum for teacher qualifications and expand opportunities for early childhood education, another proposal that earned broad support in the Senate.

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 Kevin Lindsey, Director, Education Policy, at KevinL@firstfocus.org.

Sincerely,

President