



July 8, 2015

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PROMOTE EQUAL OPPORTUNITY IN EDUCATION

Support the Kirk-Reed-Baldwin-Brown Resource Equity Amendment to S. 1177

Dear Senator:

On behalf of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights and the 31 undersigned organizations, we write to urge you to support the Kirk-Reed-Baldwin-Brown Resource Equity Amendment to S.1177, the Every Child Achieves Act. This amendment builds on existing reporting requirements in the underlying bill and requires states to develop plans to remedy disparities in access to critical educational resources. We are committed to a level playing field in education and believe that all students should have a fair chance to succeed in school and life. This amendment helps to make progress toward that goal.

We appreciate that the existing targeting of Title I funds to students, schools, and districts in the greatest need was maintained in the underlying bill and that the portability provision was excluded from this bill. We also believe that the new transparency around per-pupil expenditures, school climate and discipline, and access to qualified and effective teachers, principals, and other school leaders will help to identify disparities in educational opportunity. However, while the reporting requirement is robust, there is no requirement to act on the basis of that information. **It is critical that states intervene to remedy disparities in access to resources between school districts.**

Students, parents, and teachers have long recognized, and court cases at every level have repeatedly held, that schools and districts educating a larger share of low-income students and students of color have less access to the educational resources needed to support student success than their more affluent or White peers. For example, The Education Trust found in their "Funding Gaps 2015" report that the highest poverty districts receive about \$1,200 less per student than the lowest poverty districts.¹ Further, the Department of Education found in the Civil Rights Data Collection that a quarter of high schools with the highest percentage of Black and Latino students do not offer Algebra II and fewer than half of American Indian and Native-Alaskan high school students have access to the full range of math and science courses in their high school.² These disparities are unjust and undermine the goal of college and career readiness for all students.

The Kirk-Reed-Baldwin-Brown amendment makes progress toward closing these opportunity gaps and should be supported by every member of the Senate. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Nancy Zirkin, Leadership Conference Executive

¹ http://1k9gl1yevnfp2lpq1dhrqe17.wpengine.netdna-cdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/FundingGaps2015_TheEducationTrust1.pdf

² <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/crdc-college-and-career-readiness-snapshot.pdf>

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Vice President, at zirkin@civilrights.org, or Liz King, Leadership Conference Director of Education Policy at king@civilrights.org.

Sincerely,

The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights
AFL-CIO
Alliance for Excellent Education
American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee
American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education
American Association of University Women (AAUW)
American Civil Liberties Union
American Federation of Teachers
Association of University Centers on Disabilities
Children's Defense Fund
Council of Parent Attorneys and Advocates
Easter Seals
Judge David L. Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law
League of United Latin American Citizens
NAACP
National Center for Learning Disabilities
National Center for Special Education in Charter Schools
National Council of La Raza (NCLR)
National Disability Rights Network
National Down Syndrome Congress
National Urban League
National Women's Law Center
New Leaders
PolicyLink
Southern Education Foundation
Southern Poverty Law Center
Stand for Children
TASH
Teach For America
Teach Plus
The Education Trust
UNCF