



League of United Latin American Citizens

August 2, 2017

The Honorable Betsy DeVos
Secretary
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20202

Dear Secretary DeVos:

On behalf of the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), the oldest and largest Latino civil rights organization, I write to express my concern regarding ongoing reports that states are drafting accountability plans that include requests for waivers to key provisions of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) aimed at protecting underserved students.

More specifically, LULAC National is concerned that some states, like Florida, have drafted state accountability plans that ask the Department of Education to allow them to skirt subgroup accountability, accountability for English language proficiency, and requirements surrounding providing native language assessments.ⁱ

In April, LULAC, along with several other civil rights organizations, sent you a letter urging the Department to ensure rigorous implementation of ESSA, especially key provisions put in place to protect the delivery and access to high quality education for underserved students. As the letter states, *ESSA plans that allow schools to shirk their responsibility to all children, especially groups of children who have been shortchanged for too long, fail to meet the intent of the law and should be rejected.*ⁱⁱ

Florida's draft state plan requesting that the Department of Education exempt the state from key federal provisions, including its responsibility regarding native language assessments, is a clear example of a state attempting to circumvent its responsibility to English learners.

As the Department of Education continues its review of state submitted accountability plans as required in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESAA), LULAC National requests that ED reject any plans from states that, like Florida, aim to shirk their responsibility to deliver a high quality public education to every child.

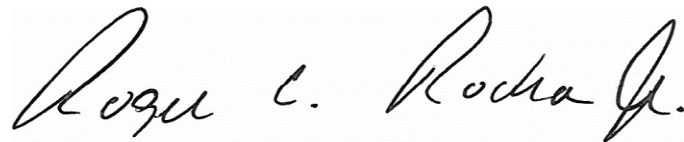
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In addition, LULAC National requests that ED direct states to submit all public comments submitted on their draft ESSA plans to the department as part of their submission and that these comments be made available to the public to ensure transparency.

The Department of Education has a responsibility to protect and serve the interests and education of all students, not the convenience of state governments. Your department should adhere to the letter of the law and ensure that every state is held accountable for the education of all students, especially the most vulnerable, underserved students, English learners, students with disabilities, and others.

We have faith that with your leadership states will provide the highest quality public education for our students. For more information, or should you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact Luis Torres, LULAC National Director of Policy, by email at latorres@lulac.org or by phone at 202-833-6130.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Roger C. Rocha Jr." The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first and last names being more prominent.

Roger C. Rocha, Jr.
LULAC National President

ⁱ II, D. B. (2017, July 26). Florida to Seek Waiver From Key ESSA Provisions. Retrieved August 02, 2017, from <http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2017/07/20/florida-to-seek-waiver-from-key-essa.html?qs=daarel%2Bburnette%2Bii%2B>

ⁱⁱ LULAC National letter archive: <http://lulac.org/assets/DeVos-ESSA-State-Plan.pdf>