



The Honorable Virginia Foxx  
2262 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington DC 20515

The Honorable Bobby Scott  
1201 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Foxx and Ranking Member Scott:

The undersigned member of the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD) Education Task Force write to share our principles and recommendations as you consider reauthorization of the Higher Education Act.

CCD is the largest coalition of national disability organizations and the CCD Education Task Force advocates for Federal public policy that ensures the self- determination, independence, empowerment, integration, and inclusion of children and adults with disabilities in all aspects of society. The CCD Education Task Force sees these principles as critical elements in a society that recognizes and respects the dignity and worth of all its members.

#### A Few Facts:

- Despite significant strides in public policy, people with disabilities remain the poorest, least employed, and least educated minority in America (Senate HELP Committee, 2014). Without the education and training needed to start a career, young people with disabilities are trapped in a pattern of perpetual poverty and dependence upon state and federal benefits.
- Youth with intellectual disabilities have the lowest rates of education, work, or preparation for work after high school of all disability groups.
- The [latest data](#) from the Employment Policy and Measurement Rehabilitation and Research Training Center indicates that 33 percent of working-age people with disabilities participate in the labor force, compared to 77 percent of their peers without disabilities.
- Researchers have projected that 63 percent of all U.S. jobs by 2018 will require some postsecondary education and that 90 percent of new jobs in growing industries with high wages will require, at a minimum, some postsecondary education (National Center on Educational Outcomes, 2013).
- While 94% of students with learning disabilities received accommodations in high school, only 17% received accommodations in post-secondary education ([National Center for Learning Disabilities](#), 2014) and many go without the accommodations and supports they need.

Students with disabilities must be thoughtfully and fully included in any policy changes considered for the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act. As the reauthorization of the Elementary and

Secondary Education Act (ESEA) demonstrated, the meaningful inclusion of students with disabilities is now the expectation, rather than the exception.

As such, the CCD Education Task Force makes the following recommendations for any consideration of the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act (HEA):

- **Include the crucial provisions of H.R. 3199, the “Improving Access to Higher Education Act” in a comprehensive reauthorization of HEA.** These provisions include:
  - Training faculty to deliver accessible instruction, including: accommodations, effective transition practices, distance learning, and career pathway guidance;
  - Establishing an office of accessibility in every institute of higher education (IHE);
  - Developing university-wide universal design for learning (UDL), including a new grant program to implement UDL across the entire institution or within a distance learning program, making all aspects of college more accessible for students with disabilities (**we support these new UDL provisions, as well the UDL provisions currently in HEOA**);
  - Increasing accessible instructional materials and technologies by establishing a commission to develop guidelines for IHEs to use to provide high-quality instructional materials and technologies to students with disabilities, especially students who are blind or have vision loss;
  - Expand higher education options for students with intellectual disabilities by updating a program that provides funding to IHEs to educate students with intellectual disabilities on campus and integrate them into the higher education community; and
  - Improving data collection and closed captioning training by adding more information about students with disabilities in IHE data collection efforts and reauthorizing the Real-time Writers grant that provides training for closed captioning services.
  
- **Include the Respond, Innovate, Succeed, and Empower (RISE) Act (S.1295 & H.R. 2782) in a comprehensive reauthorization of the HEA.** This includes:
  - Authorizing increased funding for a technical assistance center that provides students and families information on disability services available in college and how to access them and offers college faculty training and resources on best practices to support students with disabilities;
  - Requires IHEs to accept an IEP, 504 plan, or prior evaluation as documentation of a student’s disability when seeking accommodations in an IHE, preventing students from having to undergo a new, costly and burdensome evaluation that many IHEs require.
  - Requiring IHEs to submit to the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) or other federal data collection efforts key data related to their undergraduate students with disabilities.
  
- Additionally, on October of 2015, the CCD Education Taskforce submitted recommendations for the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act (HEA). CCD continues to believe that the principles and recommendation outlined in the 2015 statement must be considered in any comprehensive reauthorization of the HEA. The principles and recommendations can be found at: <http://c-c-d.org/fichiers/CCD-Principles-and-Recommendations-for-the-Higher-Education-Act-10-06-15.pdf>

We look forward to working with your offices as you move forward with this critical reauthorization of the Higher Education Act.

Sincerely,

ACCSES

American Association of People with Disabilities

American Foundation for the Blind

Arc of the United States

Association of Assistive Technology Act Programs

Association of University Centers on Disabilities

Autism Society

Center for Public Representation

Council for Exceptional Children

Council for Learning Disabilities

Council of Administrators of Special Education

Council of Parent Attorneys and Advocate

Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund

Division for Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children (DEC)

Easterseals

Higher Education Consortium for Special Education

Learning Disabilities Association of America

National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities

National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE)

National Center for Learning Disabilities

National Center for Special Education in Charter Schools

National Center for Special Education in Charter Schools

National Disability Rights Network

National Down Syndrome Congress

Perkins School for the Blind

School Social Work Association of America

Teacher Education Division of the Council for Exceptional Children

The Advocacy Institute

The Arc of the United States

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