



May 28, 2015

The Honorable Bob Casey  
393 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Casey:

On behalf of the Education Taskforce of the Consortium of Citizens with Disabilities (CCD) which represents the nearly six million students with disabilities who receive special education services across the country, we write to extend our most sincere appreciation for your work during the Health Education Labor and Pensions Committee mark-up of the of the *Every Child Achieves Act* (ECAA). We write especially to thank you for Introducing the *Empowering Parents and Students Through Information Act* (S. 528).

Your leadership and support of students with disabilities through S. 528 directly contributed to ensuring provisions were included in the ECAA requiring that states assure clear and appropriate guidelines apply for individualized education program (IEP) teams when determining that a child's significant cognitive disability justifies assessment using alternate standards. Additionally, your bill helped assure additional provisions were included in the ECAA that:

- ensure parents of students the state plans to assess using alternate assessments are involved in the decision to apply alternate standards;
- provide evidence that students with the most significant cognitive disabilities are making progress in the general curriculum for the grade in which the student is enrolled and in assessments aligned with that curriculum;
- promote the use of accommodations to increase the number of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities who are tested against grade-level academic achievement standards;
- ensure that general and special education teachers and other staff know how to administer assessments;
- require that students who take an alternate assessment are not precluded from attempting to complete the state requirements for a regular secondary school diploma.

Together, these provisions significantly protect and support the rights of students with disabilities and also reinforce research-based best practices that we know make a critical difference in students having access to the same educational opportunities as their peers. CCD appreciates your efforts to assure the outcomes of all students matter in the reauthorized ESEA.

Again, thank you for your leadership on behalf of students with disabilities and their families. We look forward to working with you as the *Every Child Achieves Act* moves forward.

Sincerely,

ACCSES  
American Foundation for the Blind  
Association of University Centers on Disabilities  
Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law  
Brain Injury Association of America  
Council for Learning Disabilities  
Council of Parent Attorneys and Advocates  
Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund  
Easter Seals  
National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities  
National Association of State Directors of Special Education  
National Center for Learning Disabilities  
National Down Syndrome Congress  
The Arc

cc: The Honorable Lamar Alexander, Chairman  
The Honorable Patty Murray, Ranking Member

*The Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities is a coalition of national consumer, advocacy, provider and professional organizations headquartered in Washington, D.C. Since 1973, the CCD has advocated on behalf of people of all ages with physical and mental disabilities and their families. CCD has worked to achieve federal legislation and regulations that assure that the 54 million children and adults with disabilities are fully integrated into the mainstream of society. For additional information, please contact:*

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