



KEY PROBLEMS WITH THE REPUBLICAN BILLS

Since its passage ten years ago, there has been broad agreement that the **No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)**, the most recent reauthorization of the **Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)**, is outdated and is restraining schools from making the kinds of improvements needed to benefit students, communities and the economy.

NCLB should be rewritten this year. The rewrite should ensure that:

- **all students graduate from high school, college and career-ready;**
- **all students have access to a world-class education regardless of background or zip code;**
- **increased flexibility is balanced with accountability to children, their families, and taxpayers.**

Unfortunately, instead of building on what we have learned over the last ten years, the Republican majority have introduced a pair of partisan bills (H.R. 3989 and H.R. 3990) that would turn back the clock on equity and accountability in American public education.

By taking the partisan approach, the Republican bills ensure NCLB will not be rewritten this year, leaving millions of children subject to a broken education system.

- Historically, ESEA reauthorizations have been bipartisan. Consensus-driven reforms ensure wider buy-in and real change on the ground.
- Both Chairman Harkin and Secretary Duncan have said a partisan bill will not reach the President's desk. By going partisan, the Republicans ensure that the status quo will hold, barring actions taken by the Administration.
- Since Congress has not acted, the Administration is now offering states that qualify the opportunity to apply for waivers from NCLB.

The Republican bills walk away from the broad national consensus that our schools must prepare students to graduate college-ready and career-ready.

- The bills do not contain requirements that states set high standards to graduate students who are college and career-ready.
- The bills do not support a high quality, meaningful assessment system.
- The bills do not include critical programs to help states adopt new standards and make them meaningful in every classroom and to every teacher.

The Republican bills shirk our nation's civil rights responsibilities to ensure all children have access to a quality education.

- The bills dismantle the core of accountability under current law. Schools will not be expected to improve. Students will not be served equitably. Schools will not be expected to intervene when they are not.
- The bills completely remove students with disabilities from the accountability system by allowing all students with disabilities to be taught to different standards and to take different assessments than the rest of the student body.
- The bills remove requirements to improve achievement for English Language Learners under current Title III law.
- The bills dilute assistance for disadvantaged students by block-granting Title I funding and consolidating critical services provided to English Language Learners, migrant students, Indian students, or neglected and delinquent students.
- The bills shift funds away from the schools with the most poverty.

The Republican bills undermine accountability to taxpayers.

- The bills remove Maintenance of Effort requirements that ensure states and districts maintain their share of funding in order to receive federal funds.
- The bills block-grant a large number of programs, which reduces accountability for the quality of services that these programs provide or how program funds are spent.
- The bills earmark 10 percent of the \$2.6 billion block grant for private entities that operate outside of the traditional school system, including through school vouchers.
- The bills cap federal education funding at FY11 levels with inflationary increases after 2014.

The Republican bills eliminate critical supports to provide a balanced education.

- The bills focus solely on math and reading assessments, without programmatic support for literacy or STEM or other subjects to provide for a well-rounded curriculum.
- The bills eliminate wrap-around supports that are critical to support student learning.
- The bills eliminate requirements to ensure quality professional development for teachers.
- The bills create an arbitrary cap on teacher quality funds for class size reduction, regardless of school need and despite research showing the importance of small class size in the early grades.