



## NATIONAL CONFERENCE of STATE LEGISLATURES

*The Forum for America's Ideas*

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*Director of Administration*  
*Department of Legislative Services*  
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**William T. Pound**  
*Executive Director*

December 7, 2015

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
U.S. Capitol, S-230  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Harry Reid  
Minority Leader  
United States Senate  
U.S. Capitol, S-221  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Leader McConnell and Leader Reid:

The National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) supports the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and urges passage of the conference agreement. This effort, culminating in a nearly-unanimous conference committee vote, is a true testament to the bipartisan recognition that change is greatly needed in our nation's education system. ESSA acknowledges the traditional role of states and localities in guiding education policy while maintaining accountability and promoting a more healthy state-federal relationship.

NCSL appreciates that Congress has taken notice of the priorities we outlined for reauthorization, and are glad to see so many reflected in this agreement. We are especially pleased that the conferees recognized the importance of having state legislators at the table when the state Title I plan is developed. As elected officials, we welcome this responsibility and the accountability that comes with it to the citizens of our states.

We are also pleased with the special attention given to children and youth who are neglected, delinquent, at risk, Native American, or among other special populations. Charting a path for these children to be fully integrated into the educational system and participating in a regular elementary, middle and high school experience is a critical goal. It is also key that students' records and other important documentation travel with them, wherever they go.

By moving to fix the broken policies of No Child Left Behind, you are ensuring that students will not have to wait yet another year for their schools to have the flexibility they need to help them succeed. The state accountability system in ESSA benefits your constituents—*our* constituents—by allowing states to put in place common sense measures that maintain high standards and help parents better understand how both students and their schools are performing.

As the voice of 7,383 state legislators from across the country, we again urge you to support the conference agreement.

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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sharon Tomiko Santos". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Representative Sharon Tomiko Santos  
Washington House of Representatives  
Co-Chair, NCSL Education Committee

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Howard Stephenson". The signature is cursive and elegant, with the first name being the most prominent.

Senator Howard Stephenson  
Utah Senate  
Co-Chair, NCSL Education Committee

cc: Members of the United States Senate