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March 6, 2017

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Lamar Alexander
Chairman
Committee on Health, Education,
Labor, and Pensions
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member
Committee on Health, Education,
Labor, and Pensions
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators McConnell, Schumer, Alexander, and Murray:

NCSL supports S.J. Res. 26, a resolution of disapproval blocking U.S. Department of Education regulations regarding institutions of teacher preparation. The resolution would stop a rule finalized in October 2016. NCSL previously commented on the proposed rule and a subsequent reopening of the proposed rule, saying the regulation “goes beyond the statutory requirements of the Higher Education Act (HEA) and fails to recognize the authority of states and localities to govern education.” In both sets of comments, NCSL called on the department to withdraw the regulation.

NCSL does not support federal definition of the indicators states will use to assess the performance of their teacher preparation institutions. NCSL continues to believe that the department vastly underestimated the burden of these regulations. NCSL also believes that these regulations would negatively impact equity in education by incentivizing the placement of new teachers in high-needs schools, and by negatively impacting program eligibility for federal TEACH grants.

States remain committed to improving the teaching profession, and will continue to find innovative ways to improve teacher preparation without federal mandates. If this rule remains in place, energy and effort, as well as funding, would be directed toward meeting the requirements of these regulations and away from innovation and reform in teacher preparation programs and the profession.

Sincerely,

William T. Pound
Executive Director, NCSL

CC: United States Senate

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