

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 24, 2015

The Honorable John Kline
Chairman
House Committee on Education
and the Workforce
2181 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Robert Scott
Ranking Member
House Committee on Education
and the Workforce
2101 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Kline and Ranking Member Scott:

Because quality instruction in history, civics, economics, and geography is essential to the preservation of our Republic's system of representative democracy, we urge you to include the Senate's provisions to support local schools in elevating instruction in these subjects when you meet to finalize the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

Each generation must learn anew the principles of our system of government and of our economy. Without the provisions included in the Every Child Achieves Act (S. 1177), many states and Local Education Agencies lack the resources needed to provide quality education in these subjects in rural and urban schools across the country. Schools have eliminated government classes as a graduation requirement; reduced instructional time to fifteen minutes a day or less; some even allow students to meet their civics requirement by volunteering to answer phones and file papers in the school office. One survey of Iowa social studies teachers revealed that fewer than 50 percent had been offered opportunities for professional development in history or civics in the previous two years. The result: NAEP tests document that fewer than 25 percent of eighth graders are capable of identifying the purpose of the Bill of Rights.

The Every Child Achieves Act includes four provisions to help states prepare engaged and informed citizens:

Section 2302 provides competitive funding to LEAs to improve the teaching of history and civics.

Section 2303 establishes intensive academies for teachers and students to learn more about history and civics.

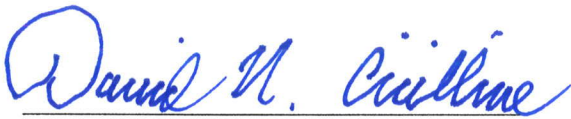
Section 2304 authorizes grants to non-profit organizations to make a range of innovative, engaging approaches to engaging underserved students in history, civics, and geography available to local schools and school districts.

Section 1005 allows parent engagement funds to be used to support financial literacy activities.

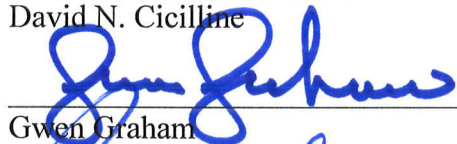
Because there are no corresponding provisions in the Student Success Act (H.R. 5), we urge you to recede to the Senate provisions in conference. The health of our democracy depends on the quality of instruction today's students receive.

Thank you for your commitment to improving K-12 education. We look forward to working with you to restore to all students the education necessary in a democracy.

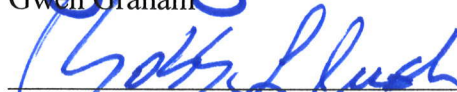
Sincerely,



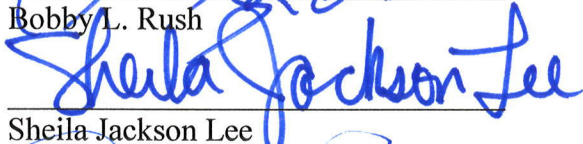
David N. Cicilline



Gwen Graham



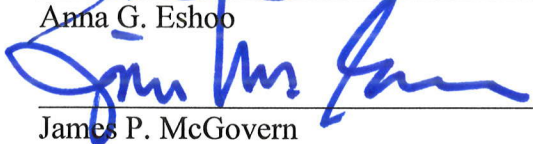
Bobby L. Rush



Sheila Jackson Lee



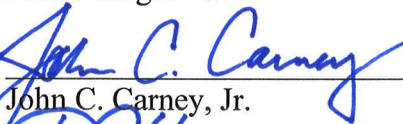
Anna G. Eshoo



James P. McGovern



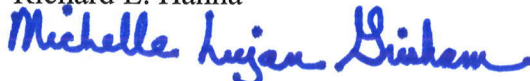
Niki Tsongas



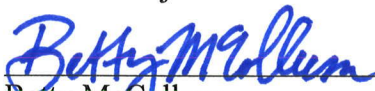
John C. Carney, Jr.



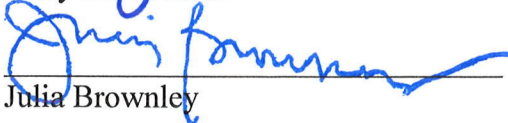
Richard L. Hanna



Michelle Lujan Grisham



Betty McCollum



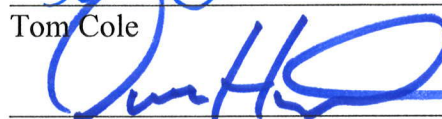
Julia Brownley



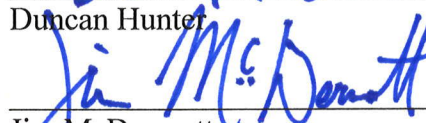
Dennis A. Ross



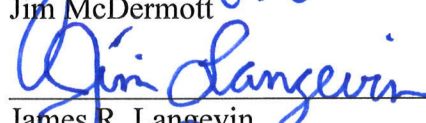
Tom Cole



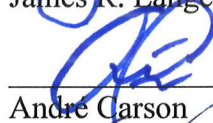
Duncan Hunter



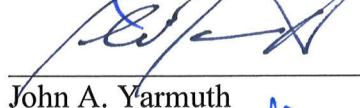
Jim McDermott



James R. Langevin



Andre Carson



John A. Yarmuth



Peter J. Visclosky



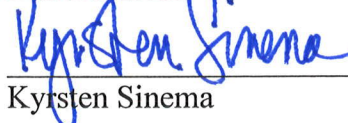
Michael M. Honda




Eric Swalwell

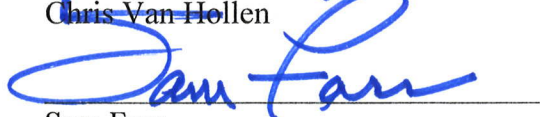


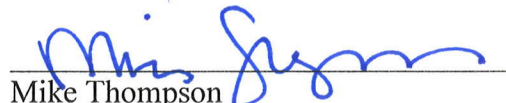
Dan Benishek




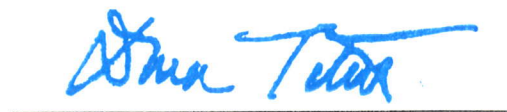
Kyrsten Sinema


Chris Van Hollen

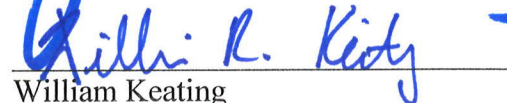

Sam Farr


Mike Thompson


Doris Matsui


Dina Titus


Jan Schakowsky


William Keating