



Statement on Senate passage of Every Child Achieves Act

July 16, 2015

WSSDA Members –

Today was a historic day in the Senate with the passage of S. 1177, the Every Child Achieves Act of 2015. Kudos especially to Senator Patty Murray, who added to her well-earned reputation as a legislator who works in a bipartisan fashion for the benefit of her constituents. The final vote, 81-17 in favor, certainly is a sign that both Senate Republicans and Democrats are serious about the reauthorization of No Child Left Behind (NCLB), and a message to their colleagues in the House of Representatives that compromise is possible and appropriate on this bill.

But, we are just halfway home on reauthorization. Now, a conference committee will be formed with members from the House and the Senate to resolve differences in the two bills. (House passed its version of reauthorization, H. R. 5, the Student Success Act, last week.) Assuming that the conference committee can settle on compromise language, both the House and the Senate will have another opportunity to vote on the bill before it is sent to President Obama for his signature.

Many difficult issues remain to be resolved. The House version contains Title I portability language that was not approved in the Senate. Portability means that Title I monies would follow students to where they attend school in the fall, and not in line with budgets that are formed by districts in the spring. In addition, the White House, along with many Democrats in both legislative bodies, have signaled their desire to strengthen federal accountability requirements in a final bill.

All of this is to say that calls, emails, texts and tweets need to be sent to our Congressional delegation—especially those in the House—that the important goal remains to come up with a compromise bill and not to engage in partisan bickering or 2016 election politics. All of us in education—kids, teachers, classified staff, administrators and board members—want the NCLB era to end. This is our chance.

WSSDA will keep members informed about developments in the conference committee and, hopefully, toward a final vote and presidential signature. In the meantime, it would be helpful for you to both thank and encourage your congressional representative on the importance of getting reauthorization to the finish line.

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