



## Committee on Education and the Workforce Democrats

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Press Office: 202-226-0853

Wednesday, February 11, 2015

### **Remarks of Ranking Member Robert C. "Bobby" Scott (D-VA) In Support of the Democratic Substitute to H.R. 5 Education and Workforce Committee Full Committee Markup of H.R. 5, the "*Student Success Act*"**

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Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

Mr. Chairman, the amendment before us is a substitute for the underlying bill because H.R. 5 in its current form retreats from the most important principles of ESEA. It abandons our commitment to a high-quality education for all children, and for taking American public education back decades.

The Democratic substitute seeks to address the fundamental flaws within the Republican bill through sound, evidence-based policies. Unlike H.R. 5, our substitute builds upon the lessons of the last 13 years to bring our public education system into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century to ensure all students are ready for the global economy. It achieves this by:

- First and foremost, upholding our civil rights responsibilities to ensure all students receive a high quality education, regardless of income, race, language, or disability status;
- Requiring states to set high and meaningful standards for all students. We want them to be college and career ready when they graduate and to ensure there is no need for remediation when they move onto post-secondary education. We cannot go back to a time when states were allowed to mask performance of students using weak accountability systems. Our substitute requires institutions of higher education to affirm that these standards are high quality and ambitious so that any standards set by the states are substantive and truly prepare our students.

- To continue our progress toward more equitable schools, our substitute requires timely and meaningful data on student outcomes such as growth, achievement, and graduation rates, disaggregated by income, race, ethnicity and disability. Again, we cannot go back to a time when the achievement of our most at-risk students was hidden.
- The Democratic Substitute, unlike H.R. 5, expects and requires accelerated progress from student subgroups who are furthest from college and career readiness;
- The Democratic Substitute prioritizes evidence based strategies for school interventions. It holds schools responsible for the success of *all* students by strengthening state-driven accountability and school improvement systems informed by local needs and evidence-based strategies;
- It requires states and districts to undertake real steps toward remedying resource inequities and support struggling schools in improvement by using equity indicators – such as access to AP courses, the level of student engagement, reductions in school disciplinary actions – in addition to measures of student achievement, in accountability systems;

The substitute also supports our teachers and principals by providing much needed funding to ensure that our teachers have the tools and resources they need to do their jobs.. It also provides teachers and school leaders with access to targeted professional development and time to collaborate with one another to support student success.

- It restores separate funding for English Language Learners because we know these children need direct support. As one of the fastest growing segments of student population in our nation, we must safeguard a distinct funding stream for these children.
- It provides dedicated funding for supports and programming we know makes a difference – early childhood education, STEM, literacy, family engagement, the arts, wraparound services, and school-community partnerships – and unlike the underlying bill – our substitute targets these funds to communities who need it most;
- The substitute also addresses concerns around too much testing by providing states support to review the quality of their tests and eliminates unnecessary testing.
- The substitute targets funding to where the need is greatest, while improving access to and oversight of those resources by demanding results from States and districts.

At its core, ESEA is a civil rights law. The law is meant to guarantee all children – regardless of their background or ZIP code – equal access to a well-rounded, world-class education. The Democratic substitute makes sure we uphold that responsibility.

ESEA reauthorization, as proposed in our substitute, would continue to target limited federal funds to our most at risk students – poor, minority, and limited English proficient students, and students with disabilities while focusing on improved outcomes for ALL of our students.

All of these policies – high standards for student success; strong, state-driven accountability and improvement systems; support for teachers and administrators, and increased local flexibility – are critical to improving American public education. We can bring none of them to bear, however, without increased federal support. We cannot address the need for resource equity without the resources.

The American public education system offers – and must continue to offer – an equal opportunity to all children. Every child in this country deserves a quality education, one that prepares them for lifelong success.

To put our nation’s children first, I urge my colleagues to vote “yes” on the Democratic substitute on H.R. 5.

I yield back.

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