

**Opening Remarks of the Honorable Bobby Scott**  
**Committee on Education and the Workforce**  
***Full Committee Hearing “Next Steps in K-12 Education: Examining Recent Efforts to***  
***Implement the Every Student Succeeds Act”***  
**June 23, 2016 at 9 a.m.**

Mr. Chairman, thank you for calling this important hearing to discuss implementation of the bipartisan law we worked to craft and enact last year. I look forward to dialogue with both Secretary King and the panel of expert witnesses concerning the Department of Education’s ongoing efforts to provide states and school districts with the clarity and guidance necessary to ensure effective implementation of the Every Student Succeeds Act.

As I have stated previously, I am proud of our collective efforts to craft a strong bipartisan law that was worthy of the President’s signature. Doing so was no small feat. However, passing legislation is only one step of many. Fulfilling the promise of the Every Student Succeeds Act rests in successful implementation that honors Congress’ longstanding intent of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act; the intent to support,

promote and protect, at all levels of government, the right to educational opportunity for every child, regardless of race, income, language status, or disability.

While the ESSA returns much decision-making to the state and local level, this new law is not a blank check. Federal law includes important guardrails – most importantly, states and school districts are required to take action when students aren't learning. States and districts get to decide which actions are most appropriate to address each school's unique context, but the action is a non-negotiable.

A robust regulatory framework is necessary to ensure that states and school districts are getting the job done and ACTING in each and every school required by federal law. Regulations empower states and school districts to fully comply with federal law.

Getting this right is hard work and the federal government has an important role to play.

I want to thank the Department of Education, under the leadership of then-Acting Secretary King, for moving so quickly to collect feedback from and provide needed clarity to practitioners, parents, and community members through proposed regulations.

I also want to commend the Secretary and his staff for their transparency and continued collaboration with members of this committee and our staffs throughout the process. The Department's demonstrated commitment to fulfilling its regulatory responsibility is critical for helping states and school districts move forward expeditiously.

On this point, there is considerable agreement. Although some state and local stakeholder groups originally urged that there be no regulatory framework, those very same groups – in combination with others on the negotiated rulemaking panel – reached an agreement on the proposed assessment regulatory text. I want to thank members of the negotiating panel, including the Department, for working – and making

compromises – to reach consensus on proposed regulations for some of the most contentious and challenging issues within the entire law. Their consensus serves as a powerful affirmation of the need for the clarity and direction that regulations provide.

In addition to the negotiated rulemaking process, the Department recently released its proposed regulatory text for accountability, intervention, data reporting, and consolidated state plan development for public comment. Again, I want to thank the Secretary for moving quickly.

Many individuals and groups requested additional regulatory clarity on these important provisions, and the Department heeded those requests.

As has been emblematic of the Department's work to-date, I am sure that robust dialogue with all stakeholders, including Congress, will inform revisions and improvements to the proposal during the 60 day comment period, which closes on August 1. I look forward to hearing from today's experts on the specifics of the Department's proposal.

Just as the federal government works to meaningfully engage with diverse stakeholders to effectively implement the new law, state and local leaders must use the clarity provided by federal regulations to work collaboratively with all stakeholders in developing new plans, as the implementation process moves forward.

The upcoming election will usher in a new administration, and with less than six months left before that transition, Secretary King's time at the Department is winding down. With this upcoming change in leadership, states and school districts need the consistency and dependability provided by regulations, election year or not.

I look forward to hearing from the Secretary about his efforts to put in place a meaningful regulatory framework that empowers states and districts to fulfil congressional intent and improve educational equity beyond the current administration.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.