



## Secretariat of Catholic Education

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### ACTION ALERT

April 27, 2010 -

Dear Friends,

On Friday, March 12, 2010, the US Department of Education released its proposal for the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Act (ESEA), *A Blueprint for Reform*. In response to this document, which also reflects the wishes of the Obama Administration, the Congressional education committees have been holding hearings on various sections of the proposal. The House Education and Labor Committee (E&L) held most of its hearings in March and also requested input from the public through email comments by March 26 (our office sent an Action Alert on this on March 17, 2010).

So far in April, the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee (HELP) has held four hearings and has scheduled three more up to May 4. The Chairman, Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA), requested that the public communicate its concerns and suggestions to his committee by:

Friday, May 7 to [ESEAComments@help.senate.gov](mailto:ESEAComments@help.senate.gov)

#### **Please use this opportunity to send your own comments!**

No one can be certain that a bill to reauthorize ESEA will be introduced anytime soon, but the current flurry of activity points to a strong push to do so. *We are proceeding here at USCCB as if a bill will be introduced and come up for a vote this summer*, even if only in one house. **All of us must do all that we can to impress Congress with the importance of improving access for Catholic schools students and teachers to participate in federal education programs, especially in Titles I-A and II-A.**

The extra value of your comments rests in your ability to **provide examples** of your schools' experiences, both positive and negative, of the timeliness and effectiveness of consultation and implementation of services for your students and teachers. For example:

--If you have experienced **meaningful consultation** followed by cooperative discussions with your public school officials, devote 2 or 3 sentences to explaining why it works so well. Then urge the members of HELP to consider incorporating this good practice into the bill. However, if your experience has been negative, explain the problem and offer a possible solution. (Be positive and avoid the blame game.)

--If your school has experienced a **steady decline in the amount of funding available** for services, then describe the negative effects of the inadequate funding, e.g. fewer students/teachers can be served, time provided for remedial reading or math must be reduced to ineffective amounts e.g. fewer than 90 minutes a week for 2 or 3 sessions. However, if your allocations have remained steady and adequate, describe the progress made by students over the course of the year.

**A special note for schools/offices located in these states.** One or both of your Senators are members of HELP. Be sure to include the name of your school and the town in which it is located. You are a **constituent** of the senators who represent your state and your experiences will be considered extra carefully.

AK (Murkowski)	AZ (McCain)	CT (Dodd)	CO (Bennet)
GA (Jackson)	IA (Harkin-Chair)	KS (Roberts)	MD (Mikulski)
MN (Franken)	NC (Hagan & Burr)	NH (Gregg)	NM (Bingaman)
OH (Brown)	OK (Coburn)	OR (Merkley)	PA (Casey)
RI (Reed)	TN (Alexander)	UT (Hatch)	VT (Sanders)
WA (Murray)	WY (Enzi – Ranking Member)		