

March 15, 2010

Representative John Yarmuth
435 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Representative Jared Polis
501 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20511

Dear Representatives Yarmuth and Polis:

We, the undersigned education organizations would like to thank you for your leadership on addressing the literacy needs of all students through the introduction of H.R. 4037, the Literacy Education for All, Results for the Nation (LEARN) Act.

As you are aware, literacy development is an ongoing process, beginning in early childhood and continuing through elementary and secondary school. Even before the beginning of formal schooling, children from low-income families are less likely than students from higher-income families to recognize letters and understand the relationship between letters and sounds. Without intervention, disparities in educational outcomes persist throughout elementary school and beyond. According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress, more than two thirds of all fourth and eighth graders are not proficient readers, and these students are disproportionately poor and minority. Further, researchers at ACT have found that, absent strong intervention, eighth-grade academic achievement is highly predictive of college and career readiness at graduation.

Such interventions are necessary because to be successful in the twenty-first century requires skills that an earlier generation never imagined. What students need to know and do to be ready for higher education, work, and civic life is much more demanding than it once was. Creating globally competent graduates requires high level reading and writing skills, and these skills are prerequisites for success in other high-growth fields, including science and technology. The LEARN Act will ensure that students from birth through grade twelve acquire the reading and writing skills necessary to succeed in school and after graduation.

The LEARN Act would create much-needed federal support for comprehensive state and locally led literacy programs to ensure that children from birth to twelfth grade have the reading and writing skills necessary for success in school and beyond. It would authorize \$2.35 billion to fund state and local school-based literacy programs that span from birth to grade twelve. The grants would provide dedicated funds for early childhood, elementary, and adolescent literacy programs.

The LEARN Act would provide funds for job-embedded, continuing high-quality professional development that would prepare teachers to improve literacy instruction; analyze data to improve student learning; use diagnostic, formative, and summative assessments to inform instruction; and effectively implement literacy intervention strategies. Teachers would then be able to

provide students, including special education students and English language learners, with excellent instruction in reading and writing, including in vocabulary development, phonemic awareness, the use of diverse texts, comprehension, and the ability to communicate in writing for multiple purposes with diverse audiences.

Thank you again for demonstrating your support for meaningful literacy instruction by introducing this bill. We look forward to continuing discussion about the contents of the bill as it moves forward.

Sincerely,

1. Academy for Educational Development
2. ACT
3. Alliance for Excellent Education
4. American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education
5. American Association of University Women
6. American Federation of Teachers
7. American Occupational Therapy Association
8. American School Counselor Association
9. Association for Career and Technical Education
10. Association of American Publishers
11. Association of Assistive Technology Act Programs
12. Association of Teacher Educators
13. Citizen Schools
14. College Board
15. Council of Chief State School Officers
16. Council for Exceptional Children
17. Higher Education Consortium for Special Education
18. Institute for Educational Leadership
19. International Reading Association
20. Knowledge Alliance
21. Learning Disabilities Association of America
22. National Association of Elementary School Principals
23. National Association of Federally Impacted Schools
24. National Association of School Psychologists
25. National Association of Secondary School Principals
26. National Association of State Boards of Education
27. National Association of State Directors of Special Education
28. National Center for Learning Disabilities
29. National Council of Teachers of English
30. National Down Syndrome Congress
31. National Down Syndrome Society
32. National Education Association
33. National Forum to Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform
34. National Middle School Association

35. National PTA
36. National School Boards Association
37. National School Supply and Equipment Association
38. National Title I Association
39. National Writing Project
40. Parent-Child Home Program
41. Pre-K Now
42. Reading Recovery Council of North America
43. Scholastic Inc.
44. School Social Work Association of America
45. Southeast Asia Resource Action Center
46. TASH
47. Teacher Education Division of the Council for Exceptional Children
48. Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Inc.
49. The Advocacy Institute
50. The Arc of the U.S.
51. The Association of Educational Publishers
52. United Cerebral Palsy
53. Vocational Evaluation and Career Assessment Professionals Association
54. VSA arts