



Representative Paul Ryan
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Representative Nancy Pelosi
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

May 22, 2018

Dear Speaker Ryan and Leader Pelosi,

On behalf of AASA, The School Superintendents Association, the Association of Educational Service Agencies, the National Rural Education Advocacy Coalition, and the Association of School Business Officials International, representing public school system leaders across the country, I write to express our opposition to bringing H.R 4508, the Promoting Real Opportunity, Success, and Prosperity through Higher Education. Reform (PROSPER) Act to the floor. We encourage you to prioritize your limited floor time bills with bipartisan backing, rather than this bill that would not garner the support from Democrats or the Senate.

In a recent survey of nearly 1,000 school superintendents, school business officials, and educational service agency administrators in 47 states, we found that 94 percent of respondents reported having difficulty hiring qualified school personnel, including 90 percent having difficulty hiring teachers. Because of this growing teacher shortage, federal policy should improve our support and investment in teacher preparation and teacher incentive programs. The PROSPER Act not only does not improve this investment – it eliminates all federal support for teacher preparation and incentive. We are especially concerned by the elimination of Public Service Loan Forgiveness, which is an extremely helpful tool for teachers and ensures they have an incentive to stay in the classroom through the hardest years of teaching.

Bringing the PROSPER Act to the House floor would stop any bipartisan discussions in the House on the reauthorization of this bill that is important for teachers and those who run school districts. We urge you to not bring H.R. 4508 to the House floor and insist on a transparent, bipartisan process to reauthorize the Higher Education Act. We look forward to working with the Committee to develop and advance a bill to support and strengthen teacher preparation and incentive programs. Please do not hesitate to contact Leslie Finnan at lfinnan@aasa.org or 703-203-3105.

Sincerely,

Leslie Finnan

Senior Legislative Analyst
AASA, The School Superintendents Association