

July 7, 2015

Dear Representative:

On behalf of AASA, The School Superintendents Association, representing more than 10,000 school administrators across the United States, I write to urge you to oppose the A-PLUS Act when it is considered as an amendment to HR5, the Student Success Act. As the representatives of local school district leaders we are the national organization most invested in returning control over critical education decision-making back to the local level. However, we believe that the A-PLUS Act would do a terrible disservice to our nation's students and our school district leaders and urge you to vote NO when it is on the floor later this month.

AASA agrees with the American Enterprise Institute, which also opposes the A-PLUS Act, that "a no-strings-attached block grant is an overreaction to federal overreach. The American people deserve – and the federal government can properly backstop – basic transparency in education."<sup>1</sup> The Student Success Act provides important transparency and considerable flexibility to state and local education agencies to make appropriate decisions about standards, assessment and accountability for the students who reside within their borders. While we appreciate the desire by supporters of the A-Plus Act to reduce the regulatory and compliance burden on districts, we think there are smarter and more effective ways of reducing these administrative barriers than what is proposed in the A-PLUS Act. Namely, the funding flexibility afforded in the Student Success Act will provide critical autonomy to state and local education officials to prioritize taxpayer dollars and target spending to their communities' most pressing education needs.

While the A-PLUS Act is a preposterous piece of legislation on the whole, by far the most egregious provision is one that allows a state to use federal resources for *any* educational purpose permitted by state law. This means that a state with a state voucher program could redirect the bulk of its federal resources away from public schools towards private, religious schools as long as the state indicates they intend for the resources to assist "disadvantaged" students. The state would have complete discretion to distribute the dollars to any education entities they deem fit under state law regardless of the quality of these institutions and their ability to serve students who are struggling academically.

If the House chooses to incorporate the A-PLUS Act into the Student Success Act, AASA will be unable to continue supporting HR5. AASA welcomes the opportunity to see ESEA reauthorization move to completion as this reauthorization is a top legislative priority for our members. We are hopeful that the House can move the ESEA reauthorization process forward without the incorporation of an amendment that will only do harm to our nation's students and schools and reiterate our plea to vote NO on the amendment.

Sincerely,



Sasha Pudelski  
Assistant Director of Policy & Advocacy

---

<sup>1</sup> Eden, Max. "The 'A-Plus' Act Gets an F." US News. U.S.News & World Report, 7 Apr. 2015. Web. 02 July 2015.