

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
Washington, DC 20515-1504

AGRICULTURE  
CHAIRMAN  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON DEPARTMENT  
OPERATIONS, OVERSIGHT, AND NUTRITION

JUDICIARY

POLICY

SMALL BUSINESS

March 26, 2015

The Honorable Tom Cole  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and  
Human Services, Education and  
Related Agencies  
2358-B Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa Delauro  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and  
Human Services, Education and  
Related Agencies  
2358-B Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Cole and Ranking Member Delauro:

We ask that the Fiscal Year 2016 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations Bill include language to restore state decision-making and accountability with respect to state academic content standards. The decision about what students should be taught and when it should be taught has enormous consequences for our children. Therefore, parents ought to have a straight line of accountability to those who are making such decisions. Those decisions should be made at the state or local level, free from any pressure from the U.S. Department of Education.

We support eliminating further interference by the U.S. Department of Education with respect to state decisions on academic content standards by including the following language in the Fiscal Year 2016 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations Bill:

(a) In General.—Funds appropriated under this Act or any prior Act shall not be used by the Secretary of Education—

(1) to require a State or local educational agency to develop or implement any set of academic content standards common to multiple States, including the Common Core State Standards developed under the Common Core State Standards Initiative, or any other specified set or type of academic content standards selected by the Secretary, or assessments aligned with such standards, including as a condition of approval of a State plan submitted to the Secretary, an application for a waiver issued by such Secretary under section 9401 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7861), or as a condition of approval or competitive preference for an award of Federal funds under any grant, contract, or cooperative agreement;

(2) to establish any criterion that specifies, defines, or prescribes the standards or measures that a State or local educational agency uses to establish, implement, or improve

academic content standards, academic achievement standards, academic assessments, accountability systems, systems that measure student growth, measures of other academic indicators, or teacher and principal evaluation systems; or

(3) to award any grant, contract, or cooperative agreement to a consortium of States that requires or specifically authorizes the development of assessments aligned with any set of academic content standards common to multiple States, including the Common Core State Standards developed under the Common Core State Standards Initiative, or any other specified set or type of academic content standards selected by the Secretary.

(b) Rule of Construction.—Nothing in subsection (a) shall be construed to limit the discretion of an individual State or local education agency to use funds provided through a grant, contract, or cooperative agreement that does not otherwise violate subsection (a) for any purpose consistent with the terms of the grant, contract, or cooperative agreement, including the development or implementation of any set of content standards, assessments, or curricula that the State or local educational agency chooses to develop or implement without regard to a Federal requirement or incentive.

Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

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