

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 7, 2015

Chairman Lamar Alexander
Senate HELP Committee
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Chairman John Kline
Committee on Education & the Workforce
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Ranking Member Patty Murray
Senate HELP Committee
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Ranking Member Robert C. “Bobby” Scott
Committee on Education & the Workforce
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Alexander and Kline, and Ranking Members Murray and Scott:

As you negotiate the terms of a bipartisan agreement to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), we urge you to ensure a strong focus on science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education. We believe that commitment to the STEM disciplines is vitally important to the success of our children and our nation.

In today’s economy, every student needs to have a strong foundation in STEM subjects to land and succeed in virtually any job—from manufacturing on the shop floor to conducting research in a lab to negotiating in a boardroom. Further, there is a growing correlation between high-paying jobs and STEM-focused occupations. If we strive to train the next generation to compete in an increasingly globalized economy, we must maintain a strong federal commitment to improve teaching and learning in STEM fields.

Despite the growing importance of STEM education, only 16 percent of high school seniors report an interest in pursuing STEM careers, even though STEM jobs generally tend to deliver more opportunities and better salaries. The average income for a STEM job is \$79,000 per year, which is more than double the wage of a non-STEM job. Furthermore, a more robust national STEM policy could also address the worrisome underrepresentation of women and minorities in STEM fields, which has persisted for far too long.

Both the House and the Senate have made significant progress in advancing legislation that would modify and reauthorize ESEA, which was last reauthorized by Congress in 2002 as the No Child Left Behind Act. We are hopeful that a bipartisan agreement on a final bill can be reached that will help ensure our students are adequately prepared for 21st Century careers.

To this end, we urge you to preserve dedicated funding for STEM-related activities in a final agreement. We support a Senate-passed provision (Title II-E), which would provide each state with dedicated resources to focus on improving teaching and learning in STEM subjects. This provision would support partnerships among schools, businesses, non-profits, and institutions of higher education—supporting a wide range of STEM-focused objectives including recruitment, retention, and professional development of educators. Additionally, this provision would expand learning opportunities both in and outside the classroom while closing achievement gaps for at-risk and high-need student populations.

If we are going to empower our students to compete in the global economy, we must maintain a strong federal commitment to improve teaching and learning the critical STEM fields. We look forward to following the ESEA conference process and look forward to working with you to ensure that STEM education remains a national priority.

Sincerely,



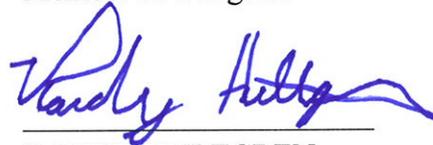
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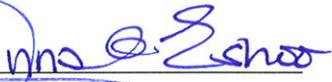
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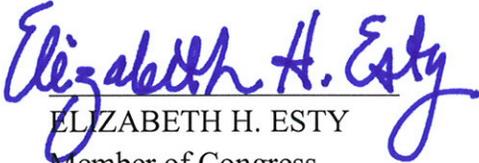
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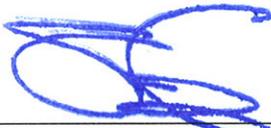
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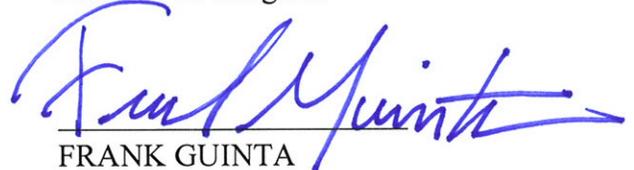
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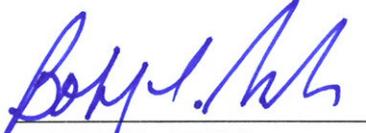
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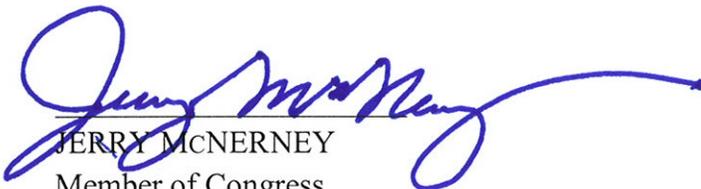
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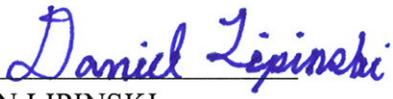
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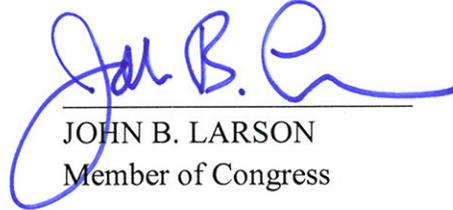
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