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March 2, 2017

The Honorable Lamar Alexander  
Chairman  
Senate HELP Committee  
428 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray  
Ranking Member  
Senate HELP Committee  
428 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Alexander and Ranking Member Murray,

On behalf of the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) we are writing to express our concern over House Joint Resolution 57 that would overturn the U.S. Department of Education's regulation implementing the Every Student Succeeds Act's (ESSA) core requirement that schools be held accountable for the performance of historically marginalized students, including students with disabilities. Congress has never before voted to overturn an education regulation and we urge you not to overturn the ESSA regulations. The U.S. Department of Education issued this regulation after the public, including both educators and students and their families, filed over 21,000 comments.

The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC)—an international association of special educators, administrators, related service personnel, higher education faculty, and researchers—is the voice and vision of special education. Our mission is to advance the success of children with exceptionalities. We accomplish our mission through advocacy, standards, and professional development.

The regulation strengthens the ESSA by providing key flexibilities and clarifying what the law requires, and specifying timelines for states to develop an accountability plan, including report cards for schools. Dismantling the regulation would lead to chaos in ESSA implementation as states are well on their way in drafting state plans, accountability systems and reporting systems. In addition, if the Congress overturns this regulation it potentially would provide the current Administration greater control over the bipartisan law and the nation's public schools. The regulations as currently written help to clarify for states, educators, families and communities what is possible under the law. Finally, replacing this regulation would undermine ESSA's civil rights protections and guardrails.

Thank you for considering our position on the ESSA regulations and we urge you to vote "NO" on House Joint Resolution 57. Preserve the critical protections and rights for students with disabilities.

Please feel free to contact me at [debz@cec.sped.org](mailto:debz@cec.sped.org) if you have any questions or need additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Deborah A. Ziegler". The signature is written in a cursive style and is placed on a light gray rectangular background.

Deborah A. Ziegler, Ed.D.

Director  
Policy and Advocacy

Cc: Members of the Senate HELP Committee