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December 9, 2015



Ms. Nancy Ruscio
Homer Central School District
80 South West Road
Homer, NY 13077

Dear Ms. Ruscio,

Last week with my strong support, the House of Representatives passed a final version of the Early and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), which represented the culmination of months of bipartisan negotiations between the House and Senate.

This historic vote represents a significant and positive shift in the overall tone and tenor of our country's education policy that will empower educators at the state and local levels to be the drivers of innovation and opportunity for our children. I want to take this opportunity to share with you some highlights of this bill:

- **Academic Yearly Progress (AYP):** The Every Student Succeeds Act eliminates the federal Academic Yearly Progress (AYP) standards for schools and allows states to adopt their own accountability systems that must include long-term education goals and regular measurements of academic progress.
- **Highly Qualified Teacher Provision:** The Every Student Succeeds Act eliminates the "Highly Qualified Teacher" provision from current law, which has allowed the Department of Education to unilaterally determine teacher qualification and training standards. Under this new legislation, states would develop their own individual teacher evaluation programs that must be tied to established metrics.
- **Maintaining Rigorous Standards:** I believe strongly in standards -- if the United States is to compete globally in an increasingly competitive marketplace, our students must be educated to the highest level. However, as the recent failed experiment with Common Core has demonstrated, standards must not lead to the development of rigid curriculums that stifle teacher innovation. This legislation continues the requirement that states regularly test their students but allows them to independently develop rigorous assessments, standards, and accountability metrics. To ensure that state standards are comprehensive, the bill requires that they be challenging, clearly documented, and aligned with college admissions standards.
- **Rolling Back Common Core:** The Every Student Succeeds Act prohibits the federal government from mandating a one-size-fits-all set of standards, such as Common Core, and allows states to opt out of Common Core with no financial penalty. Additionally, the

bill also prohibits the federal government from incentivizing, requiring, or conditioning the receipt of federal funds on the adoption of any particular set of assessments.

- **Support for Preschool Programming:** I am especially pleased that this legislation includes for the first time a provision directly related to early childhood education, which is an issue I strongly support in Congress. The bill authorizes the Preschool Development Program to provide competitive grants to states in order to assess the availability and quality of existing preschool programs. The evidence is clear that investing in our children from birth to age five reaps social and economic dividends long into the future and the inclusion of this provision in the final bill marks a strong step forward for early childhood education policy.

As the father of two young children currently enrolled in New York's public school system, it was important to me that we got this bill right. While I do not necessarily agree with every provision in this bill, I believe that overall it is what our educators have asked for from their federal representatives and most importantly that it is what our children deserve.

If you should have any additional questions or concerns, as always I encourage you to contact my office. We work for you.

Warm Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. L. Hanna", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Richard L. Hanna
U.S. REPRESENTATIVE