[Senate and ESEA: That's a Wrap!](http://www.aasa.org/aasablog.aspx?id=37678&blogid=286)

Noelle Ellerson July 16, 2015 LEADING EDGE NREAC/AASA Blog

Earlier today, the Senate voted (81-17) to pass the Every Child Achieves Act (ECAA). As a strongly bipartisan proposal to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the bill is a welcome step forward, bring an overall ESEA reauthorization effort nearly 8 years in the making the closest its been to the finish line. Today’s Senate vote follows last week’s House vote, and the bills now go to conference (to reconcile differences) before hopefully making it to the President’s Desk.

AASA was pleased to support the bill and provided daily updates and calls to action on the blog. You can find the final status of all amendments as filed in [this spreadsheet](http://www.aasa.org/uploadedFiles/Policy_and_Advocacy/files/ESEA%20Analysis%20071615%20FINAL.xls). Amendments without a listed action were not considered.

With a final vote of 81-17, 14 Republicans and 3 Democrats voted [against the bill](http://www.senate.gov/legislative/LIS/roll_call_lists/roll_call_vote_cfm.cfm?congress=114&session=1&vote=00249). Voting against the bill were Blunt (R-MO), Booker (D-NJ), Crapo (R-ID), Cruz (R-TX), Daines (R-MT), Flake (R-AZ), Lee (R-UT), Moran (R-KS), Murphy (D-CT), Paul (R-KY), Risch (R-ID), Rubio (R-FL), Sasse (R-NE), Scott (R-SC), Shelby (R-AL), Vitter (R-LA), and Warren (D-MA). Those not voting included Graham (R-SC) and Nelson D(FL).

Highlights from the floor debate: As you’ll recall, more than 200 school system leaders were in town last week for the AASA advocacy conference and were on the hill when both the House and Senate were considering their respective b for ills. There were eight large priorities we were watching, and we are pleased to see that AASA was 8 for 8 with these in the Senate debate:

* Student Data Privacy: Sen. Vitter withdrew his student data/privacy bill, which was overly prescriptive/limiting and linked ESEA and student data privacy too closely. The Hatch/Markey commission as adopted by amendment was something AASA endorsed, and calls for a report to examine what information Congress needs to make appropriate federal education policy related to student data/privacy.
* Vouchers and Portability: The Senate defeated TWO amendments calling to allow Title I dollars to be restructured as vouchers or to follow a child to a school of their choice. AASA is strongly opposed to both vouchers and portability, and AASA’s Sasha Pudelski co-chairs the national coalition that leads the charge against vouchers and portability.
* Accountability 2.0: AASA was actively engaged in efforts to defeat proposals that wanted to increase federal requirements related to accountability. Proposals (Murphy/Booker) included mandating the identification of schools in the bottom 5%, identifying schools graduating less than 67% of their students, expanded data disaggregation, and more. We were pleased to see these amendments either defeated or withdrawn.
* Student Bullying: AASA actively supports legislation aimed at educating staff and students alike on how to avoid, identify and respond to instances of bullying. The Franken amendment under consideration in the Senate, however, included a private right to action, to which AASA was opposed. We were pleased to see this amendment defeated and welcome the chance to work in conference with any members interested in policy related to bullying.
* Equity: There was an amendment (the Kirk amendment) looking to expand the way in which schools evaluate/report the equitable allocation of all resources within a school district, including facilities and library resources. AASA absolutely supports conversations around equity, but we were concerned with data collection expanded beyond what is already collected under the Office of Civil Rights (which in and of itself has expanded significantly in recent years). We were pleased to see this amendment defeated.
* Title I Formula Change: AASA was able to ultimately endorse the Senator Burr proposal, which was adopted. Through a series of late revisions, the amendment’s new formula structure only goes into effect when allocations exceed $17 billion and then apply only to dollars exceeding that amount. This eliminates the ‘robbing Peter to pay Paul’ that would have dominated in an immediate implementation. We see room for additional improvement, but commend Mr. Burr for his continued focus on equity in ESEA allocation formulas.
* Community Schools: AASA was proud to support TWO amendments related to community schools, both of which were adopted. As a long standing member of the Coalition for Community Schools, these amendments are strong affirmations of the importance of educating the total child and engaging community partners. These amendments included one related to community school coordinators and the full-scale program.
* Edu-Flex: Sen. Cornyn and Warner introduced this amendment, the reauthorization of a pilot program that has been well received among participating states and schools as a way to allow states/districts more autonomy in leveraging state and federal resources in a flexible manner. Ed-flex is a program that delegates to states the authority to grant waivers of certain federal requirements. This bill reauthorizes the program and allows it to move forward; absent explicit reauthorization, the program would go away