

COPAA on the ECAA Title II Amendments Offered by Senator Cassidy (R-LA)

During the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) mark-up of the bipartisan rewrite of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* (ESEA), titled *Every Child Achieves Act of 2015* (ECAA), Senator Bill Cassidy (R-LA) offered amendments that specified in Title II of the ECAA that only students with dyslexia and other specific learning disabilities would benefit from the professional development offered with federal general education funds.

COPAA opposes disability-specific language in ESEA legislation. Every penny used to provide professional development to teachers must benefit all students to learn to read, not focus solely on one diagnosis. ESEA has focused on all disadvantaged students over its 50 year history and COPAA believes it would be a grave mistake to change that legacy now. Our members support students with many differing abilities or disability labels, who are entirely capable of learning to read, and yet are not being taught to read simply because the teachers have never been taught the science of reading.

The great promise of the American system of education is that, through State and local efforts, reinforced by Elementary and Secondary and Education Act (ESEA) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), we as a nation have made a commitment to educate every single one of our children and to provide them with the opportunities that a public education affords all children. COPAA believes that all children, regardless of disability or school setting must be provided with the instruction, services, and resources they need to achieve. To specify via the Title II amendments that only one distinct category of disability should benefit -- when there are 13 in federal IDEA law -- creates a precedent that undermines the effort Congress has made; with our support, to ensure ESEA supports the academic success of all children, including those with disabilities.

COPAA on the ECAA Title V Amendment Offered by Senator Cassidy (R-LA)

During the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) mark-up of the bipartisan rewrite of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* (ESEA), titled *Every Child Achieves Act of 2015* (ECAA), Senator Bill Cassidy (R-LA) offered an amendment that would alter federal charter law to allow the promotion of admission policies that would incentive schools to only offer admission to certain students with particular disabilities – in this case- students with dyslexia and other specific learning disabilities. COPAA has worked with the disability and civil rights community to ensure that updates and improvements to current charter law is consistent with creating greater opportunity for charters to recruit, enroll, education and successfully retain students with disabilities. We want policies that do not support or promote

any type of discrimination if and when states authorize lotteries for charter school enrollment. Furthermore, charters have been operating and innovating successfully in states *for over twenty years* and now is not the time to incentivize admission policies that will promote the segregation of students with disabilities. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) is about all students, including all students with disabilities, not just a choice few.