



February 8, 2017

**NATIONAL DOWN SYNDROME SOCIETY
EDUCATION ACTION ALERT**

The 115th Congress is underway, and there has been a significant focus on several critical educational issues. NDSS continues to work diligently to make sure that all the voices of the Down syndrome community are heard throughout the halls of the US Congress. We need your help to take action on two important issues.

ESSA ACCOUNTABILITY REGULATIONS REPEALED IN THE HOUSE

Yesterday, the US House of Representatives passed [HJ Resolution 57](#) under the Congressional Review Act (CRA) by a vote of 234-190, which would repeal the accountability regulations under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The regulations are important because they provide oversight to the states in designing accountability systems and reporting student performance for subgroups (including the disability subgroup) at the state, local and school district levels. Without federal oversight, states will have complete flexibility in their development of accountability systems, which will make it harder to ensure that the needs of students with Down syndrome and other disabilities are being met. This Resolution now heads to the US Senate.

TAKE ACTION: Call your US Senators and tell them to vote NO on HJ Resolution 57 and to maintain the accountability regulations promulgated by the US Department of Education for ESSA. [Click here](#) and select your state to find your Senators' names and contact information.

BILL INTRODUCED TO ELIMINATE THE US DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

This week, Congressman Thomas Massie (R-KY) introduced [HR 899](#), which would abolish the US Department of Education (ED) and place all education decision-making and policies completely within state and local control. Other cosponsors include: Rep. Justin Amash (R-MI), Rep. Andy Biggs (R-AZ), Rep. Jason Chaffetz (R-UT), Rep. Matt Gaetz (R-FL), Rep. Jody Hice (R-GA), Rep. Walter Jones (R-NC) and Rep. Raul Labrador (R-ID). NDSS strongly opposes this bill.

The US Department of Education provides federal oversight of state policies and, without it, there would be no accountability on how states and local districts serve students with disabilities and the funds received as well as no mechanism to collect critical educational data to improve educational outcomes for all students with Down syndrome and other disabilities.

TAKE ACTION: No vote on the bill is scheduled at this time but we urge advocates to call Rep. Massie's office at (202) 225-3465 and send tweets (@RepThomasMassie) to express opposition to this bill. We encourage you to mention the talking points above regarding why the Department of Education is critically important for students with Down syndrome and their families. We encourage constituents of Rep. Massie to also send emails using his [email form](#).

STAY ENGAGED AS AN ADVOCATE WITH NDSS

We need you and your voice! NDSS' mission is to be the leading human rights organization for all individuals with Down syndrome. NDSS focuses on legislative issues across the lifespan of all individuals with Down syndrome. In the coming days, months and years, we have many battles ahead for our community – especially in the areas of education, healthcare, Medicaid and employment.

Here are some ways that you can stay informed, engaged and connect with NDSS and the Down syndrome community:

- Register for the NDSS e-newsletter ([on our home page](#)), sign up for [NDSS Advocacy Alerts](#) and connect with us on social media
- Consider joining the [NDSS DS-AMBASSADOR® Program](#)
- Attend the [NDSS Buddy Walk® on Washington Advocacy Conference](#) on April 4-5, 2017, in Washington, DC

Thank you for your advocacy and support!