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2011 – 2012**

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December 1, 2011

Honorable Barbara Boxer
United States Senate
112 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20501

Dear Senator Boxer,

We have always appreciated your support of high quality programs and legislation for improving schools for English learners. As you know one out of every four students in California is learning English as a new language.

As one of your constituents, I am very concerned about Harkin/Enzin's current bill to reauthorize the ESEA. Nowhere does it address students' native language instruction, dual language instruction, nor the use of native language assessments to determine their academic progress in meeting the Common Core Standards. We have many dual language programs and strong bilingual education programs across the country, especially in California.

I currently serve as an Executive Board member of the National Association for Bilingual Education (NABE) and we would like to see federally approved national legislation that supports our nation's six million K-12 bilingual students by giving them opportunities to develop their native languages as they learn English and academic content. Bilingualism and biliteracy is a 21st century skill that all students should be encouraged to develop to contribute to the prosperity of our nation.

California has over 1.4 million English learners, and more than half of the K-12 students in San Jose speak a language other than English at home. The effects of acknowledging students' heritage, culture, and language plays a significant role in accelerating achievement academically as well as validating their identities and self-esteem. These students contribute substantially to our diverse society,

Therefore, I ask that you become our champion by speaking with Senator Harkin to encourage the inclusion of two amendments in the ESEA bill that support students' native language development and an accountability system to measure students' academic achievement in two languages. We want to ensure that the native language of six million students, Hispanic in particular, will not be left out of the Harkin/Enzin legislation.

We know that developing world language skills is crucial to increase the competitiveness of the United States and its citizens in the 21st Century global economy. Inclusion and approval of these two amendments would immeasurably advance our success in meeting the competitive economic goal that impacts all of us so dramatically.

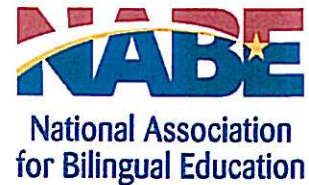
Thank you in advance for taking action on the ESEA reauthorization.

Respectively,



Dr. Yee Wan
Board Member

National Association for Bilingual Education representing over 3,000 members nation-wide,
City of San Jose Resident



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