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To: Mr. Tom Harkin, Chairman
Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee

From: National Association for Bilingual Education (NABE)

Date: May 4, 2010

Re: Public Comment on Reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act

Dear Chairman Harkin:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). We commend the HELP Committee for their inclusiveness and bipartisan approach as we all strive to provide all children with a first-class education. The National Association for Bilingual Education (NABE) is a non-profit organization committed to promoting educational equity and excellence of Bilingual Learners, inappropriately referred to as Limited English Proficient (LEP) or English Language Learner (ELL). The set of recommendations that follow are based on numerous research-based effectiveness studies that demonstrate the long-term academic and linguistic success for this population.

NABE recommends the following revisions to the ESEA for effectively educating all Bilingual Learners:

- Revise current ESEA policy that emphasizes “English” so that there is an emphasis on ***both*** academic content learning (schooling) in native language ***and*** English language development (biliteracy) and target funding for the following types of quality enrichment bilingual programs that more effectively educate Bilingual Learners:
 - One-Way Dual Language Enrichment (for Bilingual Learners only)
 - Two-Way Dual Language Enrichment (for both Bilingual Learners and native English speakers)
 - Late-Exit Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) (for Bilingual Learners only)
- Revise current ESEA policy and **re-instate** the longstanding *Bilingual Education Act* (BEA), the *Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Language Affairs* (OBEMLA), and the *National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education* (NCBE) with an emphasis on **dual language enrichment (DLE)**. Federal policy has focused on English only and academic gaps have widened



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- Revise current ESEA policy regarding derogatory terms used for identifying non-English Speaking students (i.e., LEP, ELL). These terms do not respect these students as **academic learners**, but rather emphasize a *limitation* and English as the *sole* purpose of their education. The continued use of these inaccurate terms, not only stigmatizes these students, but also perpetuates an erroneous emphasis on English as the sole purpose for schooling. A more fitting term better suited to describe the **academic** and **linguistic** behaviors of these students in *any* instructional model is **Bilingual Learner**, which reflects learning in both languages that will yield bilingualism and biliteracy and higher academic achievement
- Reinstate **Bilingual Education Fellowships** in higher education to increase highly qualified Bilingual Education leaders at the Masters and Doctoral level
- Revise current ESEA policy and collect Reading, Mathematics, Science, Dropout & Graduation data **disaggregated according to instructional model** used for each Bilingual Learner and former Bilingual Learner served in the state Bilingual or ESL program as they continue their K-12 education. These data is to be reported by school, district, and state level
- Prioritize funding for DLE program development and implementation and where bilingual education (dual language) is not available, support “content-based ESL” models (self-contained classroom with ESL certified teacher) and **discourage or do not fund English-only or ESL Pullout models** (least effective approaches)
- Prioritize funding for the development of **literacy assessments in languages other than English**. Successful literacy achievement of Bilingual Learners requires appropriate literacy assessments. This would also encourage bilingualism and biliteracy opportunities for ALL students, a vision for America by President Obama. **Literacy assessments in languages other than English will also assist states to more accurately measure the true academic skills of Bilingual Learners rather than have these skills obscured by the language of the tests**
- Prioritize funding for higher education and other teacher preparation programs designed to recruit and train highly qualified bilingual and ESL teachers
- Prioritize funding for higher education “Public School Administrator Preparation Programs” (principals, superintendents) designed to prepare **highly qualified Bilingual/ESL administrative leaders** (critical need in public schools)
- Prioritize funding for “rehiring” of highly qualified Bilingual/ESL certified teachers that have recently left the teaching profession due to frustration with poorly implemented or supported bilingual/ESL programs

Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,

Dr. José Ruiz-Escalante
President

