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February 13, 2015

Honorable Chris Murphy  
United States Senate  
303 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Murphy:

On behalf of ACCSES, and the more than 1,200 disability service providers serving over 3 million people with disabilities we represent, I am writing to thank you for your leadership in introducing the “*Every Child Counts Act*.”

All children with disabilities should have the chance to receive rigorous instruction with their peers and to the opportunity to earn a high school diploma. Without those opportunities, children will be limited in their options for the future; be it attending college or a certificate program or being eligible for entry level jobs.

While a very small number of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities need an alternate assessment, research has clearly shown, that with accommodations, almost all students with disabilities can benefit from the general curriculum and have the opportunity to earn a high school diploma.

Your bill recognizes the need for alternate academic standards and assessments for the very small number of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities while acknowledging that we must provide the best possible education and create the greatest possibilities for all students with disabilities.

Research shows that far less than 1% of all students with disabilities should be taught and assessed on alternate academic standards. Your bill recognizes those students who need those alternate standards while also keeping the expectations high for all other students with disabilities.

Thank you for introducing the *Every Child Counts Act* to ensure that children with disabilities have access to the general curriculum, are provided with the instruction they need to be successful, and have the same opportunities as student without disabilities to earn a high school diploma and go on to college and careers.

We look forward to working with you to advance this bill into law. Please feel free to call upon Leann Fox, Director of Government Affairs, at (202) 349-4279 or [lfox@accses.org](mailto:lfox@accses.org) for assistance and support.

Sincerely,

Terry R. Farmer  
CEO, ACCSES