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September 14, 2020

U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the 3 million members of the National Education Association, who are dedicated to providing all students with the learning opportunities that they deserve, we urge you to vote YES on the Strength in Diversity Act (H.R. 2639) and the Equity and Inclusion Enforcement Act (H.R. 2574). Votes on these issues may be included in the NEA's Report Card on the 116th Congress.

Educators strive to impart the importance of learning to live together respectfully and peaceably in a diverse, interdependent world. This task is more difficult when students are educated in bubbles that expose them only to those who look like them, and whose backgrounds and experiences mirror their own. Secondly, educators know that systemic racism, coupled with the lack of funding for public education in low-income communities, means that schools that are majority Black, brown, indigenous populations, and poor do not have the resources to provide a broad and rich curriculum, including advanced courses and extracurricular programs, that stimulate and engage students. This lack of exposure may harm students when they are pursuing higher education or work opportunities. But worst of all, this denies students the chance to gain insights that will help them discover their passions—passions that could fuel contributions to their communities and our nation.

The Strength in Diversity Act will provide federal grants to support voluntary local efforts to increase racial and socioeconomic diversity. The grants could fund a range of proposals, including expanding innovative programs that attract students from outside the local area, and recruiting, hiring, and training educators for such programs. The legislation can also be used to fund collaborative programs by districts, recognizing that segregation occurs across district lines.

The Equity and Inclusion Enforcement Act would allow private individuals to file lawsuits under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act that seek to address discriminatory education policies. The legislation would also ensure that every school has at least one employee to investigate complaints of discrimination based on race, color, or national origin. In addition, it creates an assistant secretary in the U.S. Department of Education to coordinate and promote Title VI enforcement.

The Strength in Diversity Act will help provide students in *every* school with the same opportunities that students in our *best* schools have, and the Equity and Inclusion Enforcement Act will enable individuals to seek redress when those opportunities do not exist. We urge you to vote YES on both bills.

Sincerely,

Marc Egan  
Director of Government Relations  
National Education Association