

October 5, 2010

The Honorable Judy Chu
2421 Rayburn House Office Building
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Re: Linked Learning Pathways Affording College and Career Success Act

Dear Congresswoman Chu:

We, the undersigned education, advocacy, civil rights, business, and community organizations, thank you for your leadership in introducing the Linked Learning Pathways Affording College and Career Success Act that promotes the Linked Learning approach to high school reform. Linked Learning provides a necessary and meaningful integration of rigorous academic content with career and technical education, work-based learning, and supplemental services. In an increasingly competitive global economy, this bill creates a powerful framework to ensure all students have the knowledge and skills to graduate from high school ready to succeed in college, career, and life.

Unfortunately, the fact remains that far too many students are not ready for college or a career. Nationally, one third of students will fail to graduate from high school with their class, and in the nation's fifty largest cities, on-time graduation is a fifty-fifty proposition. The costs of this failure are real and substantial. If the Class of 2009's high school dropouts had graduated, the nation's economy would have benefitted from nearly \$335 billion in additional income over the course of their lifetimes. Annual remediation costs for the nation's community colleges alone add up to over \$1.4 billion.

Linked Learning takes a common-sense approach to addressing this problem. To ensure students are ready for the rigors of college and careers, this approach links students to college-ready standards. To ensure education is relevant and students are able to apply knowledge in context, the approach also links students to meaningful experiences that apply knowledge in high-paying, high-growth, and high-skill industries. To ensure the venture succeeds, the approach links schools to a broader array of stakeholders including parents, businesses, community partners, and others. Linked Learning represents meaningful and necessary reforms at the school and district levels, and research demonstrates that it can help increase graduation rates, college enrollment rates, and even future wages for participating students.

The time is right for federal action. By providing students with an education that prepares them for college and careers, the Linked Learning Pathways to College, Career, and Citizenship Success Act can prepare students—regardless of background—with real and meaningful opportunities to succeed in the twenty-first century. Thank you for making this goal a priority.

Sincerely,

Alliance for Excellent Education
Association for Career and Technical Education
Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce
National Association of Secondary School Principals
National Association of State Directors of Career and Technical Education Consortium