

HELP Committee Seeking Input from Librarians re: ESEA

The Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee is seeking input from the educational community's key stakeholders including parents, teachers, librarians, students & administrators on needed changes to the current federal education law, feedback on the Obama Administration's "Blueprint for Reform" and any other education related ideas stakeholders may want to share. HELP is a bipartisan committee that has started the process of reauthorizing the federal education bill, known as Elementary & Secondary Education Act (ESEA). The "Blueprint for Reform" can be accessed at

<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/blueprint/blueprint.pdf>

Individuals are invited to submit comments until Friday, May 7th by sending them to ESEAcomments@help.senate.gov. This is a key opportunity to let elected officials know about the essential role that school librarians and school libraries play in student achievement. Please take a few minutes to email your comments to the Senate committee and encourage library supporters to do the same.

For help with developing your comments, you may want to read the testimony of Jaime Greene, a school librarian who testified before the HELP Committee earlier today: <http://tinyurl.com/34xahs2>. Other good resources with information about the important role school libraries play is www.ala.org/ additup and AASL's advocacy page on their web site: <http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/aasl/aaslissues/advocacy/advocacy.cfm>

One important issue to include in your comments is to let the Committee know how important the highly rated Improving Literacy Through School Libraries program is. In his FY2011 budget request, President Obama consolidated Improving Literacy Through School Libraries with five other literacy programs. This would mean that the only federal funding specifically earmarked for school libraries would disappear. Instead, school libraries will have to directly compete with dissimilar programs to receive federal dollars under the President's plan. However, Congress is drafting their own budget for FY2011 right now, and there is no word yet if they will go along with President Obama's recommendation of consolidation. Hearing from you could help save the Improving Literacy Through School Libraries program.

Please pass this item on to friends, colleagues, etc. and encourage them to send their comments to the HELP Committee. Thanks for all that you do to ensure young people have access to excellent library staff and resources!