

May 21, 2012

The Honorable James Moran
United States House of Representatives
2239 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515



*Working with and
Through our State
Associations, NSBA
Advocates for Equity
and Excellence in
Public Education
through School
Board Leadership*

Re: *HR 5195, the Autism Understanding and Training in School Methodologies for Educators (AUTISM) Act of 2012*

Dear Representative Moran:

The National School Boards Association (NSBA), representing over 14,500 local school boards across the nation, is pleased to provide feedback and support for HR 5195, the Autism Understanding and Training in School Methodologies for Educators Act of 2012.

NSBA has long urged Congress and the Administration to provide support for a broad range of locally developed strategies to improve instructional effectiveness to increase student achievement through professional development, technical assistance, research, and other evidence-based strategies.

We welcome support to school districts to enhance the effectiveness of teachers and other instructional personnel for all students, including students with disabilities. HR 5195 is an affirmative step in recognizing the professional development needs of teachers and paraprofessionals working with students with autism spectrum disorder, especially those from highly transient families.

NSBA also welcomes the opportunity to consider ways that HR 5195 can enhance teacher and paraprofessional effectiveness and outcomes for all students, without regard to their specific disability. Our mandate to provide a free and appropriate education for all students with disabilities provides a foundation for exploring ways to strengthen the impact of the legislation.

While the percent of students with autism served under IDEA, Part B has increased markedly in recent years, the percent of students served with other developmental delays and health impairments has also increased. Further, the largest percent remains those with specific learning disabilities, accounting for more than 40% of students served (source: www.ideadata.org). Clearly, there is a need for technical assistance for teachers and paraprofessionals described by HR 5195 for millions of children in our nation's schools.

NSBA appreciates the opportunity to work with you and your staff as the important work of educating students with disabilities moves forward. Questions regarding our position may be directed to Reginald M. Felton, assistant executive director for congressional relations at 703-838-6782, or by email, rfelton@nsba.org.

Office of Advocacy

- *C. Ed Massey
President*
- *Anne L. Bryant
Executive Director*
- *Michael A. Resnick
Associate
Executive Director*

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael A. Resnick". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'M' and a stylized 'A'.

Michael A. Resnick
Associate Executive Director