

THE Skanner

Challenging People to Shape
a Better Future Now

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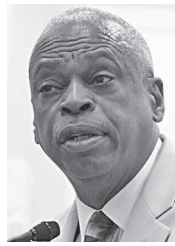
We Still Must Get the Every Student Succeeds Act Right

In late March, President Trump signed a resolution to invalidate a regulation designed to help implement the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). This move will create tremendous confusion among states that are currently in the middle of putting the new law in place in time for the 2017-2018 school year.

Even more egregious is that congressional Republicans attempted to rewrite or ignore the intention, history and plain text of the law to eliminate the rule.

The 2015 passage of ESSA was a rare recent example of successful bipartisan policy-making. The legislation both reauthorized the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and reinforced ESEA's core principles to ensure schools have the resources they need to teach all children well, particularly Black children and other children who've been neglected for too long, and give them the opportunity to succeed.

Now that the rule is gone, it's essential that the civil rights legacy and legislative intent behind ESSA and the original ESEA not be obscured and that states recognize in developing their state accountability plans that they are still bound by the provisions of the law designed to ensure



Wade Henderson
NNPA Guest Columnist

all children have equal educational opportunity.

ESEA is—and always has been—a civil rights law. It was a central plank in the Johnson Administration's "War on Poverty" and one of a long string of legislative successes emanating from the civil

“Children facing the greatest barriers to their success like Black children and children from low-income communities need and deserve schools that educate ‘all’ children well

rights movement in the mid-1960s. The legislation provided federal funds to help educate low-income children and recognized that the federal government has an important role in the educational success of every American child, no matter where they lived, how much money their parents had, or what they looked like.

Honoring this civil rights legacy, legislators ensured in 2015 that the ESSA reaffirmed

that the federal government has an essential and irreplaceable role in enforcing civil rights laws and holding states and districts accountable if schools are not educating all children well.

One only has to reflect on the long history of state and local decisions shortchanging vulnerable students to understand why the federal role is essential for historically marginalized students, including the children of color who now comprise a majority of K-12 students in America's public school classrooms.

claiming that states would have carte blanche to ignore the students who've been deprived for far too long and sweep problems in schools under the rug now that the rule is gone. And that has led to more confusion and uncertainty for states who are in the middle of drafting their accountability plans, attempting to comply with the law, and deciding how best to support their students.

But make no mistake, ESSA — and its requirements for states — are still on the books and it's important for our children's future that states understand their responsibilities under the law.

Given our nation's history, asking states to faithfully implement the law and meet their legal obligations to historically marginalized groups of children, while refusing to provide sufficient federal guidance and oversight, is a recipe for failure. No matter what Republicans say, Congress knew this and that's why provisions that were in the law since 1965 remained, which is ultimately why the civil rights community supported the final law.

Children facing the greatest barriers to their success like Black children and children from low-income communities need and deserve schools that educate “all” children well. They also deserve to know that the federal government will still hold states and school districts responsible if schools are not doing well or need help to improve.

And yet Republicans, in their zeal to rewrite ESSA's legislative history, have been

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CBC Report Calls for Economic Justice

This year has brought a number of significant developments. A new Congress, the 115th in our nation's history and similarly the 45th president have together begun a new era of government. From all indications, this new leadership seeks to create public policies and priorities that significantly alter what will remain as a governmental function. From education to environmental stewardship, health care and more, the governing toolbox of executive orders, regulation and legislation are all in use.

Despite these changing times, much of what has plagued Black America remains the same: a lack of wealth and ample access to opportunities that can virtually and permanently improve our lives.

No one needs another study that finds how Black America's net worth is a fraction of that held by White Americans. We already know that Black families who send their children to college incur a larger family debt that includes multiple generations — the student, parents and even grandparents. And in that quest for education, each generation's ability to maximize financial stability is at risk. Or that Black businesses and



Charlene Crowell
NNPA Columnist

entrepreneurs often face predictable denials for loans that could bring jobs to their own communities.

It seems that in 2017, Black America's number one need is to finally know and enjoy

“This year the Black community needs to finally know and enjoy economic justice in all of its forms

economic justice in all of its forms. We have already felt the brunt of predatory lending's high costs that steal our hard-earned wages with triple-digit interest rates. Far too many of us are still denied access to mortgages even when credit profiles tell us that we should qualify for the most affordable and sustainable home loans. And then there are the car payments that have been packed by dealers who frequently mark-up interest rates and cram additional 'services' into loans that could have been purchased far more cheaply on their own.

Thankfully, the 49-member Congressional Black Caucus recently released a report with a title that was also a clear statement, *We Have a Lot to Lose: Solutions to Advance Black Families in the 21st Century*. Its 125 pages contain chapters that speak to our unique American experience while also proposing solutions to deliver us to the full bounty of what it means to be an American to people of all colors. While space will not allow me to explore the

entire report, key elements of the chapter on economic justice deserve to be broadly shared and read.

In all, this chapter's multiple proposals represent an alternative to that reflected in President Trump's Budget Blueprint on how best to forgive education debts, ways to combat food deserts that rob entire neighborhoods of full-service grocery stores, strengthening financial regulation rules and more.

“The government should be investing in jobs programs, reasonable bank regulation, education, and health care to

ensure economic vitality into the next century, not more tax cuts for the rich and less regulation of Wall Street. We tried those options in the 2000's and all we got was a financial crash as thanks for it,” states the report.

A particularly innovative proposal is the CBC's 10-20-30 Formula for all federal agencies. It would require each agency to commit 10 percent of their budgets to the 485 counties where 20 percent or more of the population has been living below the poverty line for the last 30 years. This proposal also calls for the Trump Administration to establish a federal interagency task force to coordinate poverty alleviation efforts.

Preservation of the Community Development Block Grant, which was proposed for elimination by the White House Budget Blueprint, and increased attention to truth in lending, credit access and the Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) are also included.

In the aftermath of the foreclosure crisis, the Center for Responsible Lending (CRL) released research on the state of consumer lending that spanned a range of loan and credit products.

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