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**MLK
Breakfast
January 15
2018
NEW LOCATION!**

Opinion

It Will Take More than ESSA to Save Black Children

Last week, late nights, family road trips, and endless leisure came to an abrupt halt as children across the country headed back to school. This year, however, there is something else that requires adjustment besides early mornings and evening homework assignments. This year, a revised national education law goes into effect: the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). ESSA is the reauthorization of the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) signed into law by Barack Obama in 2015.

ESEA included landmark legislation such as the Adult Education Act (1966), which provided funding for supplemental education centers and mandated educational programming even during “out-of-session” periods for isolated and rural areas; the Women’s Educational Equity Act, which protected women and girls from discrimination in education; ESEA also included protections for those who suffer from discrimination based on race, ethnicity, or disability. ESEA has been updated every five years since it was signed into law. The original intention of ESEA was to provide equal access to quality education, emphasize high standards and accountability, authorize



Lynette Monroe

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funds for professional development, design effective instructional materials, provide supplemental education programs, and promote parental involvement.

Previous reauthorizations include the now infamous No Child Left Behind (NCLB),

“We must hold ourselves accountable for the academic success of our children

signed into law by President George W. Bush in 2001. ESSA replaces NCLB.

Education has been hailed the “new civil rights issue.” However, as we know, all too well, a law alone will not save us. The unanimous decision in *Brown v. the Board of Education* occurred in 1954; it was not until 1988 that school integration reached an all-time high with 45 percent of Black students attending majority-White schools. In 2003, a study by Harvard’s Civil Rights Project found that schools were more segregat-

ed in 2000 than in 1970 when busing for desegregation began. So we see, that laws alone will not fix decades of restricted access and rationed opportunity. We also can conclude that without a watchful eye we are bound to repeat history.

During an interview at the University of California Berkeley Oct. 11, 1963, Malcolm X said that if the government, “really passed meaningful laws, it would not be necessary to pass any more laws. There are already enough laws on the law books to pro-

the 1979 Amandla Festival in support of relief and humanitarian aid to Southern Africa, Dick Gregory, in his fifteen minute introduction of Bob Marley and Wailers, stated:

“We the decent people of this planet must stand up and say to the rest of them inhumane, cruel beast that we are not going to tolerate it no more. And then they’ll say, “what are you gon’ do about it?” If I don’t do nothing, but get out of my bed everyday and look myself in the face in the quietness of my living room and say, “I’m not gon’ tolerate it no more, I’m not gon’ tolerate it no more, I’m not gon’ tolerate it no more” that alone, when enough people stand doing it, is enough to win.”

So, let’s challenge ourselves this academic year to say, “we not gon’ tolerate it no more.” We are not going to tolerate inadequate resources, unqualified teachers, unresponsive school boards, and low academic standards. Let’s challenge our children to rise to the occasion. Let’s challenge ourselves to attend community meetings, to join the PTA, to check our children’s homework, and to make sure our children’s teachers know us by name.

Learn more about the Every Student Succeeds Act at nnpa.org/essa.

It’s Time for Congress to Pass a Hurricane Harvey

By Rep. Al Green (TX-09), Rep. Bennie G. Thompson (MS-02) and Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee (TX-18)

Historically, during times of national emergency, Americans unite to meet the challenge. In 2005, Hurricane Katrina altered the lives of thousands of Americans throughout Louisiana and Mississippi, damaging cities that have not been the same since. But, no matter our differences, we as a country have always come together in the face of tragedy. Now, it is time we act in unison once more.

Since Aug. 25, the city of Houston along with Harris and Fort Bend counties have felt the effects of Hurricane Harvey. The unprecedented storm dumped an estimated 11 trillion gallons of water on just Houston alone. First responders, emergency personnel and the U.S. National and Coast Guards along with hundreds of volunteers, were on the frontlines of the battle ensuring all those affected by Harvey were safe and dry.

As the natural disaster travels towards Louisiana and Mississippi, we ask for our great country to continue to stand with one another by volunteering, sending donations, and praying that for



Some Gulf Coast lawmakers believe that at least \$150 billion will be needed just to aid Texas residents in reconstruction. (From left-right) Rep. Al Green (D-Texas), Rep. Bennie G. Thompson (D-Miss.), Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee (D-Texas)

strength, hope and perseverance to weather this storm.

Hundreds of people of color have been affected by the storm already. If anyone would like to lend a helping hand to the relief effort

“We believe at least \$150 billion will be needed just to aid Texas residents in reconstruction

through donations, we are asking you give to local organizations that focus on people of color such as: The Black Women’s Defense League, Raices, ICNA Relief, BlackAmericaWeb.com Relief Fund or the South Texas Human Rights Center. Any contribution will be greatly received as we ask Congress

and President Donald Trump to provide immediate emergency funding and resources to deal with the crisis at hand. We believe at least \$150 billion will be needed just to aid Texas residents in reconstruction, with much more needed later as the storm continues to travel the Gulf Coast.

In addition, Southeast Texas needs funding for storm surge protection research, just as New York and New Jersey received following

the devastation of Hurricane Sandy.

Congress should pass an aid package not only to help the people of Texas, but to also provide an assurance to the American people that their government will be there for them in a time of crisis. This legislative package should not be weighed down in politi-

cal rhetoric and partisanship. Instead, it should be aimed at helping as many people affected by Harvey as possible.

It is essential for the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers to conduct a full and complete assessment of the entire Gulf Coast region’s infrastructure capabilities when it comes to flooding. Time and time again, we have seen our region suffer from hurricanes, and we must take steps to prevent another city from struggling to rebuild.

Americans from around the country have offered themselves in service to help their fellow citizens. Now, we as Members of Congress must do the same. The best way for us to do so is with a comprehensive emergency funding package. Volunteers, first responders and so many others have stepped up to the plate, now it is up to us to hit the ball out of the park.

When Congress goes back into session, let’s pass this package without unnecessary political debates. The people of the Gulf Coast are depending on us.

Rep. Bennie G. Thompson (D-Miss.), Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee (D-Texas) and Rep. Al Green (D-Texas) represent Gulf Coast residents. They are all members of the Congressional Black Caucus.