



January 30, 2017

Oppose Confirmation of Betsy DeVos for Secretary of Education

Dear Senator,

On behalf of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights and the 247 organizations listed below, **we urge you to oppose the confirmation of Betsy DeVos to be the next U.S. Secretary of Education.** All parents and students in this country – a majority of whom are of color or are low-incomeⁱ – want the best education, support and dignity for their own children. We stand with them and cannot support a nominee who has demonstrated that she seeks to undermine bedrock American principles of equal opportunity, nondiscrimination and public education itself.

The Secretary of Education's role as an enforcer of education and civil rights lawsⁱⁱ is central to advancing our shared vision of an inclusive and diverse system of high-quality public education that enables every student to live up to their potential. DeVos has demonstrated no previous commitment to ensuring equal educational opportunity in schools. Moreover, in her hearing before the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee on January 17, 2017, she failed to demonstrate that she is capable of and committed to enforcing the law – as is required of the agency's chief executive.

Betsy DeVos' deference to state flexibility, even with regard to compliance with federal civil rights laws such as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA); her claim that demonstrating support for Title IX enforcement guidance would be "premature;" and her lack of support for accountability for all schools receiving federal funds only serve to reinforce our conclusion that her inadequate previous experience and missing record of support for students' civil rights make her unfit to serve as Secretary of Education.

When compared with Secretaries of Education throughout the history of the department, DeVos' lack of experience stands out. She has never been an educator or worked directly with children and families in public schools. She has never led a school, district or state agency tasked with educating students. She has never been a public school parent or a public school student. This lack of experience makes her uniquely unfamiliar with the challenges and opportunities facing the nation's students, families, educators and schools.

The U.S. Department of Education is responsible for implementing and enforcing laws protecting students from discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex and disability and those laws that provide for educational opportunity from early childhood through graduate school. The person responsible for leading that department must absolutely be committed to enforcing federal laws on behalf of every single student in this country – without regard to LGBTQI status, family income, race, ethnicity, home language, gender, religion, disability or immigration status. Our nation's Constitution, economy, future and children deserve no less.

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Sincerely,

National (101)

The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights
The Advocacy Institute
African American Ministers In Action (AAMIA)
All Our Children National Network
American Association of People with Disabilities
American Association of University Women (AAUW)
American Atheists
American Dance Therapy Association
The American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)
American Federation of Teachers
American Friends Service Committee
Americans for Democratic Action (ADA)
Americans for Religious Liberty
Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance, AFL-CIO (APALA)
Black Women's Blueprint
Center for American Progress
The Center for Civil Rights Remedies at UCLA's Civil Rights Project
Center for Law and Education
Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)
CenterLink: The Community of LGBT Centers
Champion Women
Children's Defense Fund
Clearinghouse on Women's Issues
Communications Workers of America
Council of Administrators of Special Education
CREDO
Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund
Disability Rights, Education, Activism, and Mentoring (DREAM)
Equal Justice Society
Equal Rights Advocates
Equality Federation
Family Equality Council
Feminist Majority Foundation
Four Freedoms Forum
Franciscan Action Network
GLSEN
Harriet Tubman Collective
Healthy Teen Network
Helping Educate to Advance the Rights of the Deaf (HEARD)
Hispanic Federation

Immigration Equality Action Fund
In Our Own Voices, Inc.
Jewish Women International (JWI)
Judge David L. Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law
Know Your IX
Labor Council for Latin American Advancement
Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law
League of United Latin American Citizens
Learning Disabilities Association of America
Legal Aid at Work (formerly Legal Aid Society-Employment Law Center)
MANA, A National Latina Organization
NAACP
NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc.
National Action Network
National Alliance of Black School Educators
National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity (NAPE)
National Alliance to End Sexual Violence
National Association of Secondary School Principals
National Association of Social Workers
National Black Justice Coalition
National Center for Transgender Equality
National Coalition Against Domestic Violence
National Council of Asian Pacific Americans (NCAPA)
National Council of Gray Panthers Networks
National Council of Jewish Women
National Council of La Raza
National Council on Educating Black Children
National Council on Independent Living
National Education Association
National Employment Law Project
National Immigration Law Center
National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health
National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty
National Partnership for Women & Families
National Urban League
National Women's Law Center
OCA - Asian Pacific American Advocates
The Opportunity Institute
Parent Advocacy Consortium
Partners for Each and Every Child
People Demanding Action
People For the American Way
Poverty & Race Research Action Council
Progressive Congress Action Fund

Project KnuckleHead
Roosevelt Institute
Saving Our Sons & Sisters International
School Social Work Association of America
Secular Coalition for America
Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SEARAC)
Southern Poverty Law Center
Stop Sexual Assault in Schools
Students Resisting Trump, a project of Students for Education Reform Action Network
TASH
Teaching for Change
The Trevor Project
United Spinal Association
Women Enabled International
Women's Intercultural Network (WIN)
World Without Genocide at Mitchell Hamline School of Law
YWCA USA

State and Local Groups (147)

ADAPT Montana
Advocates for Children of New York
ALSO Youth, Inc
American Federation of Teachers/North Carolina
American Samoa Alliance against Domestic and Sexual Violence
Arizona Coalition to End Sexual and Domestic Violence
Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families
Arkansas Coalition Against Sexual Assault
Bradbury-Sullivan LGBT Community Center
Brain-Body Health Technology Institute, LLC
Bright Futures LLC CO
California Down Syndrome Advocacy Coalition
California Foundation for Independent Living Centers
CDCRC Inc.
Center for Pan Asian Community Services, Inc. (CPACS)
Chapel Hill-Carrboro Federation of Teachers
Chesapeake Down Syndrome Association
Chicago Coalition for the Homeless
Citizens Against Government Overreach
Citizens for Educational Awareness
Citizens for Public Schools
Coalition for Equal Access for Girls
Collaborative Parent Leadership Action Network
Colorado Coalition Against Sexual Assault

Community 4:12

Community Resources for Independent Living
Connecticut Alliance of School Social Workers
Creative Learning Enterprises, Inc.
Dayle McIntosh Center
Deb Davis Advocacy
Decoding DyslexiaMD
Directions for Youth & Families
Disability Action Center
Disability Policy Consortium of Massachusetts
Education Law Center-PA
Education Opportunity Network
Elmhurst Action for a Better Tomorrow
Faculty Senate, Wheelock College
Fannie Lou Hamer Center For Change
Florida Association of School Social Workers
Florida Council Against Sexual Violence
Fort Wayne Urban League
Girls Inc. of Long Island
Grow Your Own Teachers Illinois
Gwinnett Parent Coalition to Dismantle the School to Prison Pipeline (Gwinnett STOPP)
Illinois Association of School Social Workers
Independent Living Resource Center San Francisco
Indiana Coalition to End Sexual Assault
Institute for Women's Studies and Services, MSU Denver
Iowa Coalition Against Sexual Assault
Iowa School Social Workers' Association (ISSWA)
Jane Doe Inc., the Massachusetts Coalition Against Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence
JF STEM Institute
Kalamazoo Gay Lesbian Resource Center
Knoxville Area Urban League
Latino Engagement and Action Council
Lesbian Health Initiative (LHI)
LGBT Center of Raleigh
Los Angeles LGBT Center
Los Angeles Urban League
Loud Voices Together Educational Advocacy Group
Louisiana Association of Special Education Administrators
Louisville Urban League
Made in Durham
Manhattan, Community Board 2
Maryland Multicultural Coalition/State Chapter of NAME
Michigan Alliance for Special Education
Michigan Coalition to End Domestic & Sexual Violence

Michigan NOW
Michigan Unitarian Universalist Social Justice Network
Minneapolis Urban League
Minnesota Coalition Against Sexual Assault
Minnesota School Social Workers Association
Montana Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence
Mountain State Centers for Independent Living
National Association of Social Workers, CT Chapter
NC Coalition Against Sexual Assault
NCJW Peninsula Section
Nebraska Coalition to End Sexual and Domestic Violence
New Jersey Institute for Social Justice
New York State Coalition Against Sexual Assault
New York State School Social Work Association
Nollie Jenkins Family Center, Inc.
North Carolina Justice Center
Ohio School Social Work Association
Open Arms Rape Crisis Center & LGBT+ Services
OUT in the High Country
OutReach LGBT Community Center
Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape
Placer Independent Resource Services
Planned Parenthood Keystone
Public Advocates Inc.
R.E.A.C.H. (Resources for Educational Advocacy and Classroom Help)
Resource Center
Restorative Schools Vision Project (RSVP)
Rich Educational Consulting, LLC
Rockland County Pride Center
Rocky Mountain Victim Law Center
Ruth Ellis Center
Sacramento LGBT Community Center
Sandy Mislow LLC
SC Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault
SHK Global Health
SKIL Resource Center
Southwest Pennsylvania National Organization for Women
Student Advocacy Inc.
Teachers Unite
The Chicago Urban League
The DC Center for the LGBT Community
The LGBTQ Center of Long Beach
The LOFT LGBT Community Services Center
The Pride Center at Equality Park

The Urban League of Greater Atlanta
Tri-County Independent Living
Urban League of Greater Madison
Urban League of Hampton Roads, Inc.
Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence
Voices for Schools
Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault
Women's City Club of New York
Women's Law Project
Wominsport
Youth Justice Coalition
YWCA Allentown
YWCA Aurora
YWCA Binghamton and Broome County, Inc.
YWCA Bradford
YWCA Greater Austin
YWCA Greater Lafayette
YWCA Greater Portland
YWCA Kankakee
YWCA La Crosse
YWCA Mount Desert Island
YWCA National Capital Area
YWCA Northcentral PA
YWCA of Asheville and WNC
YWCA of Kaua'i
YWCA of Rochester and Monroe County
YWCA of the Greater Capital Region
YWCA Pierce County
YWCA Princeton
YWCA San Antonio
YWCA South Hampton Roads
YWCA Spokane
YWCA Union County
YWCA Warren
YWCA Yakima

ⁱ See: <http://www.southerneducation.org/Our-Strategies/Research-and-Publications/New-Majority-Diverse-Majority-Report-Series/A-New-Majority-2015-Update-Low-Income-Students-Now>

ⁱⁱ Department of Education Organization Act (Public Law 96-88)