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February 24, 2016

The Honorable Lamar Alexander
Chairman
Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member
Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Alexander and Ranking Member Murray:

The Council of the Great City Schools, the coalition of the nation's largest central city school districts, writes to express strong support for the nomination of Dr. John B. King, Jr. as United States Secretary of Education. The long overdue reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act in Congress must now be implemented in states and school districts throughout the nation, and Dr. King has the experience needed to lead this work at the U.S. Department of Education.

Dr. King began serving in the U.S. Department of Education in January of 2015, and has been Acting Secretary of Education since the beginning of 2016. Most importantly, Dr. King served in a number of education positions at the local and state level prior to coming to Washington, starting as a high school classroom teacher. His subsequent roles in founding and managing local schools provided Acting Secretary King with unique experience leading urban public schools that are closing achievement gaps and preparing college and career-ready students. In 2011, Dr. King was appointed education commissioner for the State of New York, where he oversaw the elementary and secondary schools that serve over 3 million students, as well as the public, private, and proprietary colleges and universities in the state.

In his time at the U.S. Department of Education, both before and since becoming Acting Secretary, Dr. King has focused on improving educational outcomes for all students and closing achievement gaps. His priorities for expanding early learning, delivering high-quality instruction for poor and minority students, and providing special education, English language acquisition, and innovative services in schools aligns with the goals outlined by Congress in the new Every Student Succeeds Act.

The Council of the Great City Schools urges the Senate to confirm Dr. John B. King, Jr. as United States Secretary of Education.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Michael Casserly'.

Michael Casserly
Executive Director