Senator Cornyn, Senator Bennet, Senator Scott, and Senator Warner:

We are a group of local, state, and national organizations committed to advancing evidence-based policies that increase the number of well-prepared, well-supported teacher leaders, principals, and other school leaders in every school, especially those serving the students and communities most in need. We are writing to express our support for the Teacher and School LEADERS Act.

As you know, more than a decade of research shows just how crucial it is that our schools be led by well-prepared, well-supported principals. School leaders account for 25 percent of a school’s impact on student learning, and an above-average principal can improve student achievement by 20 percentage points. Moreover, like workers in any other profession, the best teachers want to work for the best bosses. Outstanding school leaders attract and retain great educators: fully 97 percent of teachers list principal quality as critical to their retention and career decisions—more than any other factor. And school leaders transform the lowest-performing schools, where the positive effects of strong leadership on student achievement are most pronounced. In fact, a landmark study found “virtually no documented instances of troubled schools being turned around without intervention by a powerful leader.”

The Teacher and School LEADERS Act includes many improvements to Title II of the Higher Education Act (HEA) and, overall, we are thrilled that your proposal incorporates school leadership in a far more robust way.

Of particular note, we are pleased the Teacher and School LEADERS Act would:

- Expand the Teacher Quality Partnerships (TQP) program—renamed the Teacher, Principal, and Other School Leader Quality Enhancement program—beyond teachers to fund the preparation and support of teacher leaders, principals, and other school leaders.

- Update current law such that the new Teacher, Principal, and Other School Leader Quality Enhancement program would support—and make eligible for grant funding—a wider range of programs that prepare teachers, principals, and schools leaders as long as they meet clear standards of quality, including those run by institutions of higher education as well as nonprofits and other entities that provide alternative routes to educator certification, such as states, districts, education service agencies, and charter management organizations.
In addition, the Teacher and School LEADERS Act would:

- Add a new priority for high-quality applicants whose practices have the strongest evidence of effectiveness, directing federal funds toward programs and partnerships proven to make a difference for students;

- Adopt an improved definition and uses of funds for school leader residencies that reflect research-based elements;

- Incorporate school leadership programs into accountability measures within the bill, supporting greater transparency and fostering continuous program improvement;

- Help ensure that teachers and school leaders are empowered to use data as a tool to support student learning, and that educator preparation programs have the information they need to improve how they prepare their future educators for success;

- Include a stronger focus on high-need schools, advancing equity by targeting educator quality improvement efforts that support the students and communities with greatest need; and

- Ensure greater alignment between the HEA and the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), including by simplifying and streamlining definitions and provisions.

Getting well-prepared, well-supported leaders in every school is a bipartisan cause, and we thank you for your continued efforts to advance effective, equitable leadership.

Sincerely,

Business for Educational Success and Transformation in North Carolina (BEST NC)
Center for the Study of Education Policy
Chiefs for Change
Council for Exceptional Children
Data Quality Campaign
Deans for Impact
Democrats for Education Reform
EdAllies (MN)
EDGE Consulting Partners
Educators for Excellence
Hope Street Group
Innovation Classroom
Kappa Delta Pi
Knowledge Alliance
Laotian American National Alliance
Leading Educators
League of Education Voters
National Center for Learning Disabilities
National Council of Teachers of English
National Council on Teacher Quality
National Writing Project
Network of Michigan Educators
New Leaders
NJ Principals and Supervisors Association
NNSTOY (National Network of State Teachers of the Year)
NYC Leadership Academy
Profound Gentlemen
Sposato Graduate School of Education
TASH
Teach For America
Teach Plus
Teaching Matters
Third Way
TNTP