



FIRST FOCUS

MAKING CHILDREN & FAMILIES THE PRIORITY

WORKING TO ENCOURAGE COMMUNITY ACTION AND RESPONSIBILITY IN EDUCATION (WE CARE) ACT – H.R. 3762

What is the purpose of the WE CARE Act?

We cannot let the challenge of educating our students fall to schools alone; the whole community must be engaged. The WE CARE Act will strengthen ties among schools, families and communities to improve student achievement.

Why is the WE CARE Act necessary?

Roughly 25 to 30 percent of ninth graders do not graduate with a regular diploma in four years, and for young people of color, high school graduation is a 50-50 proposition. It is easy to point fingers at the education system, but solutions will only be found if we remember to look outside of it as well.

Research demonstrates that students are more likely to be successful in school and in life if they receive academic and non-academic support to meet their needs. In addition to quality curricula and highly effective teachers, students need a variety of other supports – caring adults; access to health and mental health care; safe, constructive, and fun learning opportunities during non-school hours; and others – in order to be ready for school and meet challenging academic standards.

Efforts to support high standards, ensure strong accountability, and promote teacher quality should be complemented by efforts to meet the often complex needs that students bring to the classroom – ranging from poor access to health care to a need for extra support from mentors and tutors. By leveraging community resources more efficiently and effectively, students will come to school ready to excel and develop the knowledge and skills necessary for college and adulthood.

What will the WE CARE Act do?

This legislation amends Title I of the No Child Left Behind Act to more strategically engage the community in the education of our students. Specifically, it would:

- Provide incentives for school districts, community-based organizations and others to work together to develop and implement Community Involvement Policies. These policies would leverage resources from the community to help meet students' non-academic needs and prepare them for success in the classroom.
- Call on State educational agencies and local educational agencies to include an analysis of the non-academic needs of students in their plans, along with a strategy for partnering with community-based organizations and others to meet those needs.
- Call on local educational agencies and schools to engage community stakeholders in the development of school improvement plans in order to utilize every possible resource available to help our students and schools make adequate yearly progress.

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