



July 8, 2015

Memorandum to AAG Members re: Geography Education Funding

From: Douglas Richardson, Executive Director
John Wertman, Senior Program Manager for Government Relations

We have written to you twice previously this year (at the end of January and in mid-April) to discuss developments on Capitol Hill related to the possible reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), the nation's primary federal law for K-12 programs. (The ESEA is better known as No Child Left Behind [NCLB] in its current version). As you may recall from those messages and a more-recent AAG Newsletter article in May, we have been working hard to encourage Senators to include dedicated funding for geography as part of any new law.

Progress to Date

We have had some success to this point. In the Senate Education Committee's ESEA bill, geography is again included as a core academic subject (this had been omitted in the panel's early draft legislation); and there is a new funding program that awards competitive grants "to promote innovative history, civic, and geography instruction, learning strategies, and professional development activities and programs."

The Senate bill (S. 1177), which is known as the Every Child Achieves Act (ECAA), will be brought up for debate, amendments, and votes this week. We are pleased with the progress we have achieved to date, but we are still working to encourage Senators to include a geography-specific authorization as part of the bill.

Resources for AAG Members

To help make the case to Senators and their staff members, we have developed the "AAG Resolution Supporting K-12 Geography Education," which calls for funding of K-12 geography in the ESEA and has been endorsed by 24 incumbent Governors; 25 Fortune 500 companies; and many other prominent individuals and organizations. This compelling case for K-12 geography education funding is available for your use at www.aag.org/resolution.

Additionally, the attached spreadsheet lists every U.S. Senator and their primary education staffer, including their email addresses. AAG members may also wish to use social media, such as Twitter or Facebook, to share their perspectives with members of Congress, friends, colleagues, and the wider community.

Call to Action

We always encourage AAG members to contact your elected officials to express your views on issues of importance to geography. The ESEA has not been reauthorized in over 13 years and this year's legislative action represents a good opportunity to improve the law from the perspective of the geography community. We have heard from numerous AAG members who contacted their Congressional representatives after we sent out our earlier communiques and we are grateful to those who did. We hope you will join them.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact John at jwertman@aag.org, or Doug at drichardson@aag.org.

Thank you,
Douglas Richardson and John Wertman