

Representative Steve Eliason proposes the following substitute bill:

**CONCURRENT RESOLUTION ON THE ELEMENTARY AND
SECONDARY EDUCATION ACT**

2015 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

Chief Sponsor: Steve Eliason

Senate Sponsor: _____

LONG TITLE

General Description:

This concurrent resolution of the Legislature and the Governor calls upon the United States Congress to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

Highlighted Provisions:

This resolution:

- calls upon the members of Utah's congressional delegation to sponsor legislation in Congress that reauthorizes the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA, also known as No Child Left Behind); and

- urges the State Board of Education to continue to protect and preserve Utah's exclusive sovereignty over Utah's education system if the State Board of Education considers it necessary or prudent to seek a waiver or renewal of provisions of ESEA as currently authorized.

Special Clauses:

None

Be it resolved by the Legislature of the state of Utah, the Governor concurring therein:

WHEREAS, Utah seeks to provide high-quality education for the children of the state;



26 WHEREAS, numerous education groups, business groups, and other stakeholders have
27 called upon education leaders to substantially reform and improve the education system in
28 Utah;

29 WHEREAS, such reforms have required substantial and continuing changes, including
30 changes to Utah's teacher compensation system, educator evaluation system, teacher training,
31 education standards, and assessment systems;

32 WHEREAS, the Legislature is, under the Utah Constitution, obligated to establish and
33 maintain public schools in the state of Utah;

34 WHEREAS, the Utah State Board of Education is, under the Utah Constitution and as
35 further directed by the Legislature in statute, obligated to exercise general control and
36 supervision over public schools in the state of Utah;

37 WHEREAS, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, 20 U.S.C. Sec. 6301, et seq.
38 (ESEA, also known as No Child Left Behind), as implemented, has demanded states, including
39 Utah, to make many education reforms;

40 WHEREAS, Utah's education leaders feel strongly that education reforms must be
41 under the full control of Utah's constitutionally established structures;

42 WHEREAS, funding under Title I of ESEA is governed by the provisions of ESEA that
43 mandate 100% student proficiency by 2014 in math and reading (the federal mandate);

44 WHEREAS, the United States Department of Education (USED), Congress, and the
45 states agree that the federal mandate is unattainable and must be repealed;

46 WHEREAS, ESEA was scheduled to be re-authorized in 2007, at which time the
47 federal mandate would be repealed;

48 WHEREAS, Congress failed to re-authorize ESEA in 2007;

49 WHEREAS, USED, recognizing that the unattainable federal mandate would leave
50 states at risk of losing flexibility of Title I funding, instituted a process whereby states could
51 escape the consequences of the federal mandate by applying for a waiver under conditions
52 determined by USED;

53 WHEREAS, it is argued, in a forthcoming Vanderbilt Law Review article, that the
54 ESEA waiver provisions used by USED may constitute an unconstitutional encroachment on
55 the rights and prerogatives of the states in the United States' system of dual sovereignty;

56 WHEREAS, in 2010, the Utah State Board of Education adopted new education

57 curriculum standards, known as the Utah Core Standards, to ensure that Utah students are
58 prepared for college-level work and competition in the economy of the twenty-first century;

59 WHEREAS, on 5 March 2012, then State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Dr.
60 Larry Shumway, asserted to the United States Secretary of Education, Dr. Arne Duncan
61 (Secretary Duncan), that Utah, through its State Board of Education, reserves "the right to
62 make changes to, and to add or subtract from, the Utah Core Standards at its discretion" and,
63 moreover, to assert and maintain "complete control of Utah's learning standards in all areas of
64 our public education system";

65 WHEREAS, on 7 March 2012, Secretary Duncan responded to Dr. Shumway's
66 assertion of state education sovereignty, "confirm[ing] our full and unqualified agreement with
67 your letter and your understanding of the law regarding State control over K-12 learning
68 standards...States have the sole right to set learning standards";

69 WHEREAS, on 22 August 2014, the Utah State Board of Education applied for an
70 ESEA waiver under conditions set forth by USED ("Utah's ESEA Flexibility Waiver");

71 WHEREAS, Utah's ESEA Flexibility Waiver was expressly conditioned on Utah's
72 absolute and exclusive right to modify, without negative effects, its waiver, the Utah Core
73 Standards, state assessment and accountability requirements, and teacher and principal
74 evaluations without approval of USED;

75 WHEREAS, the State Board of Education has reserved the right to withdraw Utah's
76 ESEA Flexibility Waiver if the board finds that the waiver violates Utah Code Ann. Subsection
77 [53A-1-402.6\(7\)](#);

78 WHEREAS, Utah's ESEA Flexibility Waiver, including the clear assertion of Utah's
79 unequivocal sovereignty over its education system, was accepted and approved without
80 modification by USED;

81 WHEREAS, by December 2014, USED began preparations for another round of ESEA
82 waivers, now known as renewals, to last for a period of three years;

83 WHEREAS, it is the intent of the State Board of Education to seek an ESEA renewal
84 from USED and, in doing so, would again assert Utah's sovereignty over its education system;

85 WHEREAS, the need for ESEA waivers and renewals stems from systematic and
86 widely recognized flaws in ESEA that have prompted virtually every state in the nation to seek
87 ESEA waivers or renewals;

88 WHEREAS, while Utah desires to receive its rightful portion of funds distributed under
89 ESEA with full flexibility, it will not sacrifice any degree of state sovereignty to obtain such
90 funds; and

91 WHEREAS, ESEA and its implementing regulations purport to encourage innovation,
92 reform, and change in education systems, which are concepts that parties to this concurrent
93 resolution agree with in principle:

94 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of the state of Utah, the
95 Governor concurring therein, calls upon Senator Orrin Hatch, Senator Mike Lee,
96 Representative Rob Bishop, Representative Jason Chaffetz, Representative Chris Stewart, and
97 Representative Mia Love to sponsor or cosponsor legislation in Congress to reauthorize ESEA
98 to render ESEA waivers or renewals unnecessary and to preserve Utah's state sovereignty over
99 education.

100 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature and the Governor urge the State
101 Board of Education to continue to protect and preserve Utah's exclusive sovereignty over
102 Utah's education system if the State Board of Education considers it necessary or prudent to
103 seek a waiver or renewal of provisions of ESEA as currently authorized.