



# # STRENGTH IN DIVERSITY

Show your support for the Strength in Diversity Act (H.R.2639)!

This year, our nation's racial fault lines have been in full view. As a result, people all across the country are rising up and demanding action to address the continued legacy and harms of centuries of systemic racism. These demands are not limited to policing; they include important racial justice issues such as the wealth gap and inequalities within our education system. Until we face these matters directly, as a nation, we will not be able to move forward and function as a multi-racial democracy.

Schools are the civic institutions best suited to bring people together. The unfortunate reality, however, is that our schools are more segregated today than since the 1960s. **The promise of *Brown v. Board of Education* remains unfulfilled, despite decades of ample research demonstrating the academic and social benefits of school diversity:**

- Students attending racially and socioeconomically diverse schools have higher test scores and higher college attendance rates than peers in high-poverty schools and/or schools that predominately serve Black and Latinx students.
- The benefits from attending diverse schools also continue into adulthood. These include subsequent reduced segregation in neighborhoods, colleges, and workplaces; higher levels of social cohesion; and reduced racial prejudice.

See, e.g. National Coalition on School Diversity Research Brief 5, "School Integration and K-12 Outcomes: An Updated Quick Synthesis of the Social Science Evidence" (October 2016), <http://school-diversity.org/pdf/DiversityResearchBriefNo5Oct2016Big.pdf> and National Coalition on School Diversity Research Brief 3, "The Impact of Racially Diverse Schools in a Democratic Society" (October 2010), <http://school-diversity.org/pdf/DiversityResearchBriefNo3.pdf>.

This term, Congress has an opportunity to demonstrate concrete support for local efforts to build cross-racial understanding and facilitate more equitable distribution of resources and power through voluntary school integration.

**The Strength in Diversity Act would authorize federal funds to provide planning and implementation grants to support voluntary local efforts to increase racial and socioeconomic diversity in schools.**

Grants could fund a range of proposals, including (but not limited to):

- Studying segregation, evaluating current policies, and developing evidence-based plans to address socioeconomic and racial isolation;
- Developing options for improving diversity in schools, such as weighted lotteries, revised feeder patterns or regional coordination;
- Investing in specialized academic programs or facilities designed to encourage inter-district school attendance patterns;
- Recruiting, hiring, and training new teachers to support schools covered under the plan;
- Creating or expanding innovative school programs that can attract students from outside the local area; and
- Supporting school districts, independently or in collaboration with neighboring districts, as well as regional educational authorities and educational service agencies.