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Press Statement on 1/21 US Senate HELP Committee Hearing ESEA Testing and Accountability

In response to the U.S. Senate HELP (Health, Education, Labor and Pensions) Committee hearing on testing and accountability, (scheduled for 9:30 am, Wednesday, January 21, 2015), Greg Richmond, President and CEO of the National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA), released the following statement:

"Testing, and the information that testing generates, is being debated in Congress today. For many this will be a political debate. But for the more than 1,000 government and not-for-profit entities that are charged with authorizing charter schools, the outcome of this debate will not be a political failure or victory—the outcome will have a dramatic effect on our ability to make smart decisions that impact children in more than 6,000 public charter schools. We need annual testing data in order to make well informed decisions about how well our schools are working for our children.

"As a current and former charter school authorizer, and as the President and CEO of the National Association of Charter School Authorizers, I urge Congress to retain the federal requirement for annual testing of all students in grades 3 - 8 and high school.

"Authorizers use data from consistent annual state testing to keep their end of the charter school bargain, which is to only allow schools with strong performance to continue to operate or expand.

"Help us continue to do our jobs well: keep the federal requirement for annual statewide testing in place."

Greg Richmond is NACSA's President and CEO. He was a founding board member of NACSA, serving as the chair of the board from 2000-2005. In 2005, Greg became NACSA's President. Under his full-time leadership, NACSA's national influence has expanded substantially, including a significant role in the re-opening of New Orleans schools as charter schools, in-depth training of California Department of Education staff, a multi-authorizer training and development project in New York City, and multi-year projects in Florida and Ohio. Greg is also the President of the Illinois Charter School Commission and was formerly the Chief Officer for New School Development at the Chicago Public Schools under Arne Duncan.

The National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA) is committed to advancing excellence and accountability in the charter school sector and to increasing the number of high-quality charter schools across the nation. To accomplish this mission, NACSA works to improve the policies and practices of authorizers—the organizations designated to approve, monitor, renew, and, if necessary, close charter schools. NACSA provides training, consulting, and policy guidance to authorizers. It also advocates for laws and policies that raise the bar for excellence among authorizers and the schools they charter. In late 2012, NACSA launched its [One Million Lives](#) campaign to give one million more children the opportunity to attend a great school. Visit www.qualitycharters.org.