

# U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

## WASHINGTON, DC

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### **Polis, Payne Introduce Legislation to Improve Teacher Training and Evaluation Practices**

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Representatives Jared Polis (CO-02) and Donald Payne Jr. (NJ-10) today introduced the Great Teaching and Leading for Great Schools Act, which would improve teacher and principal quality across the country by investing in evidence-based best practices for professional learning. The bill ensures that educator and principal evaluation systems are meaningfully connected to opportunities for teachers and principals to collaborate, lead, and grow in their professional practice.

The Great Teaching and Leading for Great Schools Act, which has bipartisan support, revamps Title II of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) to focus on evidence-based best practices in teacher and principal training, evaluation, and support. In particular, the bill advances a new definition of professional development that will allow for collaborative team-based learning multiple times per week. The bill also invests in the capacity of principals, assistant principals, and teacher leaders to evaluate and provide professional learning opportunities for educators.

“Too often, teachers are subjected to one-time workshops that are disconnected from their needs in the classroom,” said **Representative Polis**. “We need to give teachers the time, training and resources to collaborate and take advantage of the data revolution in education. I am proud to have worked with teachers, principals, and other stakeholders to advance a new system of professional learning that will ultimately lead to better outcomes for students.”

“Teachers and principals are the most important school based factors that impact student achievement. Unfortunately, attempts at education reform have lacked meaningful efforts to strengthen professional development,” said **Rep. Donald M. Payne, Jr.** “The Great Teaching and Leading for Great Schools Act is an important update to current law to ensure that teachers and leaders have the training and support needed to prepare our 21st Century learners. And I am pleased to cosponsor this legislation with the leadership of Congressman Polis.”

“NEA was pleased to work with Rep. Polis on this legislation,” said **Mary Kusler, Director of Government Relations at the National Education Association (NEA)**. “Every educator deserves the ability to improve their practice to benefit the students they serve. Our students deserve nothing less than educators who have access to the best professional development opportunities tailored to helping them grow as educators.”

“I commend Rep. Jared Polis for listening to educators in the development of the Great Teaching and Leading for Great Schools Act,” said **Randi Weingarten, president of the American Federation of Teachers**. “The bill recognizes that the federal government should support the development of

professional learning systems for educators—not sorting and firing schemes. The legislation allows for multiple measures of student achievement in the evaluation process—an important step away from the current testing fixation—and supports flexibility in the development of evaluation systems, a crucial element for successful implementation.”

"As an organization that supports early-career teachers committed to improving student outcomes, we were proud to work with Rep. Polis on the Great Teaching and Leading for Great Schools Act," said **Dr. Celine Coggins, CEO of Teach Plus**. "We at Teach Plus deeply believe that building career ladders for excellent teachers and ensuring that they have the time and resources to collaborate are sure ways to improve teacher retention and help students succeed."

"The measure of whether professional development for teachers is paying off should be whether it helps their students learn. The Great Teaching and Leading for Great Schools Act would achieve that goal and ensure that we're only paying for programs that are proven to help teachers gain skills—not twiddle their thumbs in mindless one-size-fits-all workshops," said **Lanae Erickson Hatafsky, Director of Social Policy & Politics at Third Way**. "We applaud Congressmen Polis and Payne for stepping forward to advocate for the interests of students, teachers, and taxpayers alike with this thoughtful and carefully-crafted bill."

Other organizations supporting this bill include:

Learning Forward, National Education Association, National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP), National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP), National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS), National Network of State Teachers of the Year (NNSTOY), National Writing Project, New Schools Venture Fund, Third Way, Teach Plus, and WestED.

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