



**The Council of Parent Attorneys and Advocates, Inc.**  
*A national voice for special education rights and advocacy*

December 8, 2014

The Honorable Jim Gerlach  
111 East Uwchlan Avenue  
Exton, PA 19341

The Honorable Suzanne Bonamici  
439 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representatives Gerlach and Bonamici:

The Council of Parent Attorneys and Advocates (COPAA) is pleased to offer our support for *Support Making Assessments Reliable and Timely Act* or the 'SMART Act.' We thank you for your leadership on this important legislation that will promote investment in reliable, high-quality assessments aligned to state content standards for all students.

COPAA is distinctly interested in assuring that all students with disabilities are included *as all other students* in all state, district and local assessments. COPAA has consistently supported key provisions of both the *Individuals with Disabilities Act* and the *Elementary Secondary Education Act* that reinforce inclusion of students with disabilities along with their peers in all assessments; high standards and high expectations for all students; full access to testing accommodations; as well as the requirement for annual state-wide assessments in English Language Arts and Mathematics. COPAA has also opposed any federal or state policy which seeks to lower standards and expectations for students with disabilities such as: testing students (for accountability purposes) below a student's age/grade; allowing unlimited numbers of students taking the alternate assessment on alternate academic standards to be counted as proficient; adoption and use of grade span testing; and/or, use of locally designed tests in place of annual state standardized assessments.

COPAA thanks you again for your introduction of this legislation. On behalf of the six million students with disabilities attending public school across the U.S., we stand ready to assist you in this important work.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Denise Marshall".

Denise Marshall  
Executive Director

cc: The Honorable John Kline, Chairman  
The Honorable George Miller, Ranking Member

COPAA is an independent, nonprofit organization of parents, attorneys, advocates, and related professionals. Our members work nationwide to protect the civil rights and secure excellence in education on behalf of the 6.5 million school age children with disabilities including the young adults transitioning to post-secondary education. COPAA's mission is to serve as a national voice for special education rights and COPAA believes that every federal law should work together to help every individual with a disability, regardless of perceived severity, to achieve an independent, community-centered and quality life.