



The Daily Dish

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Nearly 300 business groups have signed a letter to congress to approve the [Trade Promotion Authority \(TPA\)](#) bill. TPA would be able to fast track trade deals like TPP and TTIP that could bring billions into the economy. [The Trans-Pacific Partnership \(TPP\) alone](#) could create over half a million jobs and boost the US GDP by \$77 billion. The letter notes, “To realize the potential of these agreements for U.S. jobs, economic growth and competitiveness, Congress must pass Trade Promotion Authority.”

The American Action Forum turns five! AAF’s President Douglas Holtz-Eakin makes it clear that numbers are what guide the Forum, “If you have numbers to defend the argument, it cuts through a lot of the rhetoric.” [We take a look back at the years with the help of some friends in this short video.](#)

Senator and Chair of the Senate Energy Committee, Lisa Murkowski, has made it clear that she soon intends to introduce legislation that would end our oil export ban. The US’s ban was introduced in the 1970s, but has not changed since the disco years. [According to the Senator](#), the ban “equates to a sanctions regime against ourselves.”

Despite the White House’s claims that the “recovery” is doing well, [over half of Americans still worry about money](#). A new Gallup poll shows the number has remained basically unchanged since 2014 and is still well above pre-recession levels.

Eakinomics: Educational Attainment, Standards, and Testing

The United States needs better educational attainment in its K-12 schools. Eric Hanushek, a Senior Fellow at Stanford’s Hoover Institute and American Action Forum Education Expert, [wrote](#) in the Wall Street Journal that raising student attainment in this country, up to the level in Canada, could add an average of 20 percent to the paycheck of every worker. Greater attainment requires that schools perform at a higher level. He [demonstrated](#) in 2007 that the quality of education is causally related to economic outcomes and that individual earnings are systematically related to cognitive skills.

Accordingly, everyone interested in policy should be interested in K-12 education above and beyond the [political ruckus](#) over the [Common Core](#) initiative. In particular, the focus should be on re-authorizing the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), which has been stalled for eight years (“No Child Left Behind” was the last version). The Senate has begun that process and appears to be ready to move ahead with a bipartisan bill known as the [Every Child Achieves Act \(ECAA\)](#). That bill has several highlights:

- Continued Student Testing. The committee has thus far stuck to federal requirements for annual testing. However, it affords states the option of using a single “final” test or a number of shorter-term ones.
- Accountability System. The ECAA departs significantly from punitive and prescriptive actions when schools fail to meet adequate yearly progress (AYP) in English, math, and science and instead provides states the freedom to design and establish accountability systems **with minimal** federal requirements or consequences.

- **State Education Standards.** The ECAA recognizes gives states the responsibility for setting standards and prohibits the federal government from determining or approving state academic standards, and specifically names the Common Core State Standards Initiative as an example of prohibited federal overreach.
- **Charter School Programs.** The ECAA strengthens and streamlines the Charter Schools Programs (CSP) by consolidating state start-up grants and facilities aid grants into one program while adding and authorizing, for the first time, grants for the replication and expansion of high performing charter schools. This is a win for parents and students, since the additional funding for replication and expansion would ensure the growth of high performing charter schools that have demonstrated success in improving academic achievement, particularly amongst disadvantaged students.

The last time ESEA was reauthorized, the debate in the Senate lasted for seven weeks and 150 amendments were offered. If the ECAA survives such a gauntlet in the Senate, the legislative process would still be far from finished. The more conservative House of Representatives would have to put their mark on the legislation. However, everyone from the president to governors to school leaders agree that the current law has become unworkable. It is time to have it replaced.

From the Forum

[Recent Developments in Patent Policy](#) by Will Rinehart, AAF Director of Technology and Innovation Policy

[Video: The Forum at Five](#)