

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-4303

March 16, 2020

The Honorable Betsy DeVos
Secretary of Education
Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20202

Dear Secretary DeVos,

I write to you today on behalf of students, teachers, parents, and other education leaders who are facing tremendous uncertainty as our nation grapples with the COVID-19 pandemic. Many schools across the state of Texas are currently closed, and we are concerned that federally-mandated standardized testing may no longer be feasible this spring for every district.

As you are aware, 20 U.S.C. § 7861 permits the Secretary of Education to grant waivers of certain federal requirements for states, including the requirement to administer standardized testing. In consultation with local school boards, our state legislative delegation, and parents, I urge you to provide a waiver to the State of Texas in order to provide flexibility to schools and school districts on a case by case basis in Texas during this emergency.

While we believe in assessment and accountability, during this uncertain time we feel it could be tremendously difficult, and possibly dangerous to public health to move forward with standardized testing this spring for every school. It is for these reasons that I ask that you to grant a waiver from these requirements to the State of Texas without delay.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

VAN TAYLOR
Member of Congress