



Written by [Brian Koenig](#) on October 20, 2011

## Rand Paul: Time to Repeal No Child Left Behind

[Enacted](#) as part of President Lyndon B. Johnson's "War on Poverty," ESEA was a springboard for the federal government's unbounded authority and expanding reach in American education. The act was originally chartered through 1970, but the government has reauthorized ESEA every five years since its passing.



NCLB has been tormented with problems and heavily condemned by educators and lawmakers, most visibly through controversial provisions such as Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) — an academic measurement for schools and school districts based on standardized tests — and the requirement for all children to be proficient in math and reading by 2014. These provisions have led to serious unintended repercussions, one being the loss of transparency to parents and taxpayers about students' real academic performance.

Most consequential is the federal government's amplified role in the education system, as the law has severely diminished local control and influence. Indeed ESEA's last reauthorization has spawned an adverse side effect that has left local and state leaders watching their decision-making authority crumble, as American education becomes intertwined in an endless roll of bureaucratic red tape.

During a blogger's conference hosted by the Heritage Foundation, Sen. Paul explained that President Bush's education law departed from the traditional Republican stance on education, which is, low federal governance and more local influence. But rather than placing more control back to the people, NCLB siphoned off more power into the hands of politicians — and Washington politicians, nonetheless.

Speaking at the conference, the Tea Party favorite explained that the Republican platform, under Ronald Reagan, staunchly opposed the Department of Education. "Now, at the very least, if we could just be against No Child Left Behind," Paul [suggested](#), "which is not the entire Department of Education but actually doubled the size of the Department of Education, doubled the number of workers and increased federal control of education — all things that conservatives are ostensibly against."

Sen. Paul and other Republicans plan to release over 100 amendments to stall the reauthorization, which is sponsored by Sen. Tom Harkin (D-Iowa). Paul and his Republican colleagues plan to make mandatory provisions of the act voluntary, but the Kentucky Senator said their "number one amendment will be repeal of the entire No Child Left Behind [law]."

Topping out at a whopping 860 pages, the reauthorization bill seems reminiscent of ObamaCare, Paul



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contended. "We will make a stink out of the fact that nobody is going to read it. We haven't had one hearing on [reauthorizing] No Child Left Behind. They said, 'Oh, we had them in previous years.' Well, I wasn't here in previous years and I've got a vote on it. I would have liked the teachers to come in, the superintendents, the principals."

He reminded his colleagues about when former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) [said](#) of ObamaCare, "We have to pass the bill so that you can find out what is in it?" Paul's inference suggests that Sen. Harkin's shrewd tactics to revamp education in America resemble the theme of Pelosi's hankering efforts to transform American healthcare.

Paul and his Republican colleagues exploited the frightening similarities in the way Harkin's legislation is being dealt with and the fact that most states are now trying to withdraw from the requirements. "I frankly told Republicans on the committee that this is a little bit like Obamacare," said Paul. "You can read about it after it is passed, and that is insulting. I think the fact that 37 states, D.C. and Puerto Rico all want waivers [from No Child Left Behind] reminds me of Obamacare. Everyone wants a waiver from Obamacare."

Like his liberty-minded father, Sen. Paul promotes a more localized form of education, where states and local governments and communities have the ultimate authority to determine and implement their educational goals. "Teachers are on our side," he [said](#), explaining that educational professionals overwhelmingly oppose the legislation. Indeed, the federal government's autocratic authority in education has only abated student achievement, as Heritage's Lindsey Burke [wrote](#):

This represents the ninth such bet since the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, and none has proved successful. NCLB, the most recent reauthorization of ESEA, has left local school districts crying out for more freedom from federal red tape and to have their educational decision-making authority restored.



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