You’ll never believe it! The U.S. House of Representatives approved the Student Success Act, H.R. 5. It was the first vote in Congress since 2001 to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). The act was approved by a vote of 221 – 207. Representative Kramer voted in favor of the bill.

The fact there has been action taken on the reauthorization of ESEA is good news. Both NAESP and NASSP support many provisions in H.R. 5, the Student Success Act of 2013, specifically the elimination of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) and the 100% proficiency requirements, requiring disaggregation of subgroup data, and removal of the unworkable school turnaround models that are required under the School Improvement Grants (SIG) program and Race to the Top.

However, NAESP and NASSP were opposed to the bill as it does not support the principalship or a well-rounded education, continues the overreliance on standardized tests and locks in federal budget cuts from sequestration.

Congress has been trying to reauthorize ESEA (also known as No Child Left Behind) since 2007 and President Obama has threatened to veto the bill as it is currently written.

On the Senate side, the Senate Education Committee Chair Tom Harkin (D-IA) as well as the top Republican on the committee, Lamar Alexander (R-TN) have both stated they would like to see the Senate committee passed legislation move to the Senate floor for debate and a vote. No date or time has been scheduled in the Senate for ESEA to be debated before October. The outlook for a full reauthorization of ESEA will remain uncertain if the Senate is not able to pass a bill and move to a conference committee with the House of Representatives.

As the Congress gets closer to the next election cycle – yes, I know it seems like we just got out of that – it will be important for all principals to be watchful of the actions of the legislative as well as the executive branches of our government as they continue to grapple with the responsibility of the federal government in educating the young people of America.