



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**WASHINGTON TEACHERS' UNION PRESIDENT NATHAN SAUNDERS IMPLORES MAYOR GRAY  
TO REQUEST NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND WAIVERS FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**

**Washington, DC** - Washington Teachers' Union (WTU) today asked Mayor Gray to request waivers from No Child Left Behind (NCLB) requirements. This was on the heels of Monday's announcement by US Education Secretary Arne Duncan that he will offer waivers to override the requirement of the NCLB school accountability law that 100 percent of students be proficient in math and reading by 2014.

At President Obama's request, Secretary Duncan is seeking to waive the law's proficiency requirements for states that have adopted their own testing and accountability programs and that are making strides toward improvement. DCPS is already meeting many of the stringent NCLB requirements, including: adopting higher standards for high school students, creating locally designed school accountability systems to replace NCLB's pass-fail system, instituting a new teacher evaluation system and adopting Common Core Standards.

In his letter to Mayor Gray, WTU President Nathan Saunders encouraged Mayor Gray to take advantage of these waivers. Saunders also said that we must put an end to many of the unrealistic NCLB requirements which only result in closing schools in high needs communities and disrupting communities.

The US Department of Education will be issuing additional details and guidelines next month inviting states to apply for the waivers. States that refuse to sign on to this reform program will be subjected to onerous NCLB requirements.

"WTU supports change that better assists teachers and students, and our hope is that these waivers are a step in the right direction," stated WTU President Saunders. "If they effectively end high stakes testing, provide more support to schools, and enact beneficial education reform, then why not apply. We must stand with President Obama and Secretary Duncan to push for any revisions to federal and state policies that yield effective education reform."

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