

Chairman Richard Shelby
US Senate Appropriations Committee
Room S-128
The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

Ranking Member Patrick Leahy
US Senate Appropriations Committee
Room S-128
The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

Chairman Roy Blunt
US Senate Subcommittee on Labor
HHS Education Appropriations
Room S-128
Washington, D.C. 20510

Ranking Member Patty Murray
US Senate Subcommittee on Labor
HHS Education Appropriations
Room S-128
Washington, D.C. 20510

November 26, 2019

Dear Chairman Shelby, Ranking Member Leahy, Chairman Blunt and Ranking Member Murray:

The undersigned organizations representing educators, school board members and administrators, families, and students with disabilities urge you to work together and with your counterparts in the House of Representatives to increase investments in the federal education programs that serve students with disabilities.

We were extremely disappointed with the Committee's original Fiscal Year 2020 allocation for the Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations bill as it failed to provide the programs funded under this bill with a commensurate share of the budget cap increase. Schools and districts need additional resources to provide essential services to students with disabilities in order for the federal government to fulfill its commitment to provide forty percent of the excess costs of educating students with disabilities. We hope the Committee can find additional resources to upgrade its commitment to this important bill.

We were also dismayed that the Senate's recently released Labor-HHS FY2020 funding bill fell woefully short of providing sufficient funding for any federal education programs. We cannot support this bill's provision of a mere one percent overall funding increase over last year and its decision to freeze funding for the most important programs that serve students with disabilities and support educators, including IDEA State Grants. When adjusted for inflation, this freeze would effectively result in a cut to education spending.

We were encouraged to see Congress work together to raise discretionary spending caps and allow for increases in funding for FY 2020 and 2021. We hope that you can recapture that spirit of cooperation and come together to complete work on the FY 2020 Labor-HHS Education Appropriations bill before the end of the year and without resorting to a full-year Continuing Resolution. Our organizations and our nation's students with disabilities are counting on you.

Thank you for considering our views and we look forward to continuing to work with you.

Sincerely,

AASA: The School Superintendents Association
American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees
American Music Therapy Association
American Occupational Therapy Association
American Speech-Language-Hearing Association
The Arc of the United States
Association of Education Service Agencies
Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendent
Association of School Business Officials International
Council of Administrators of Special Education
Learning Disabilities Association of America
National Association of Elementary School Principals
National Association of ESEA State Program Administrators
National Association of Private Special Education Centers
National Association of Secondary School Principals
National Association of State Directors of Special Education
National Center for Learning Disabilities
National Consortium for Physical Education for Individuals with Disabilities
National Disability Rights Network
National Education Association
National PTA
National Rural Education Association
National Rural Education Advocacy Coalition
National School Boards Association
School Social Work Association of America