

April 19, 2019

The Honorable Roy Blunt, Chairman
Labor, Health and Human Services, Education,
and Related Agencies Subcommittee
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray, Ranking Member
Labor, Health and Human Services, Education,
and Related Agencies Subcommittee
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro, Chair
Labor, Health and Human Services, Education,
and Related Agencies Subcommittee
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tom Cole, Ranking Member
Labor, Health and Human Services, Education,
and Related Agencies Subcommittee
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Blunt, Ranking Member Murray, Chair DeLauro and Ranking Member Cole:

We are writing to urge you, as part of the fiscal year (FY) 2020 Labor, Health and Human Services Education and Related Agencies Subcommittee bill, to increase funding for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Grants to States program (IDEA Part B) by at least \$1.7 billion over FY2019 levels. IDEA funding is crucial for both students with disabilities and the school districts which serve them in ensuring a free appropriate public education.

In 1975, through the passage of the now named Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Congress committed to fund 40 percent of the cost of educating students with disabilities. Unfortunately, this commitment has never been fully realized by Congress or numerous Administrations. This lack of Federal funding has impacted the education of students with disabilities, making it harder for them to achieve in the same fashion as their non-disabled peers. This lack of funding has also caused fiscal challenges for school districts as they ensure the sufficiency of their own budgets.

Unfortunately, since 2009, the average Federal share per child as a percentage of the national average per pupil expenditure (APPE) has declined in each year except one. FY2019's projected share per child was about 14%, only slightly above the FY2001 level. While the Federal share has declined, the number of students with disabilities has increased by over 25 percent over the last 20 years, further amplifying this lack of Federal resources.

While Congress must also raise the budget caps prior to finalizing any appropriations legislation, the FY2020 represents a crucial opportunity to begin to reverse the trend of the declining Federal share of IDEA funding. We urge you to take advantage of this moment and provide at least a \$1.7 billion increase in IDEA Part B appropriations over FY2019. Thank you for your attention to our views.

Sincerely,

PACER Center
Advocates for Children of New York
Advocates for Justice and Education
African Caribbean American Parents of Children with Disabilities, Inc.
Alabama Parent Education Center
American Association of People with Disabilities
Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents (ALAS)
Autism Society of Minnesota

Catalyst Learning Center
Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund (DREDF)
Epilepsy Foundation
Epilepsy Foundation of Minnesota
F I R S T
FACT Oregon
Family Connection of SC
Family Resource Center for Disabilities & Special Needs/Parent Training & Resource Center
Idaho Parents Unlimited
IN*SOURCE (Indiana Resource Center for Families with Special Needs)
Indiana NOFAS, Inc.
Leadership in Disabilities & Achievement of Hawaii
Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid/Minnesota Disability Law Center
Minnesota Elementary School Principals' Association
MPACT - Missouri Parents Act
National Association of Elementary School Principals
National Association of School Psychologists
National Center for Learning Disabilities
National Disability Rights Network
National PTA
National School Boards Association
NOFAS Affiliate Network
NOFAS-Missouri
NW Disability Support
Ohio Coalition for the Education of Children with Disabilities
Parent Educational Advocacy Training Center (PEATC)
Parent to Parent of Miami
Parents Helping Parents
Parents Reaching Out
ParentsCAN-CA
PEAL Center
Proof Alliance (formerly MOFAS)
PTI Nebraska
Pyramid Community Parent Resource Center
South Dakota Parent Connection
Stone Soup Group
Support for Families
The Arc Minnesota
THRIVE Center
WV Parent Training and Information Inc.