



**CONSORTIUM FOR CITIZENS  
WITH DISABILITIES**

July 9, 2020

The Honorable Maggie Hassan  
324 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chris Murphy  
136 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chris Van Hollen  
110 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Hassan, Murphy, and Van Hollen,

The Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities Education Task Force writes to thank you for introducing the Supporting Children with Disabilities during COVID-19 Act. This legislation will provide critical funding for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) as approximately 124,000 schools across the United States which serve the 7,000,000 students served under the IDEA begin to look towards and implement school reopening policies and activities while also implementing public health protocols and ensuring the safety of all children and students.

The Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD) is the largest coalition of national organizations working together to advocate for Federal public policy that ensures the self-determination, independence, empowerment, integration, and inclusion of children and adults with disabilities in all aspects of society. The Education Taskforce of CCD works to ensure that students with disabilities have every opportunity to succeed in school and beyond.

The need for dedicated IDEA funding related to COVID-10 is critical and **cannot** be overstated. The IDEA guarantees students with disabilities a free and appropriate public education and individualized education and services outlined in a child's Individualized Family Support Plan or a student's Individualized Education Program. During the unprecedented nationwide school closures due to COVID-19, students served under the IDEA have been disproportionately impacted as the delivery of education and related services moved to distance learning.

Schools across the country now face the herculean challenge of re-opening (whether in person or through distance learning), ensuring that students and staff are safe while at school and assuring that students with disabilities receive the education and services to which they are entitled. All of this will take place during massive state budget shortfalls which will impact state education budgets in many states. The Supporting Children with Disabilities During COVID-19 Act appropriation of \$11 billion for state grants under IDEA, \$1.2 billion for early childhood education programs, and \$55 million under the Assistive Technology Act of 1998 **will be critical to help offset the enormous costs incurred by schools and districts as they make investments in technology products, services, and personnel training and move to re-open schools and educate all students, including students with disabilities.**

Again, CCD thanks you for your unwavering leadership and recognition of the critical importance of dedicated funding for the IDEA during this time as we work to ensure that schools have the necessary resources to serve every child with a disability and provide equitable educational opportunities to all. We look forward to working with you to help see this bill incorporated into the next stimulus bill. Please let us know if we can provide additional information or support you in any way.

Sincerely,

Education Task Force Co-Chairs:

Annie Acosta, The Arc of the United States  
Amanda Lowe, National Disability Rights Network  
Kim Musheno, Autism Society of America  
Meghan Whittaker, National Center for Learning Disabilities  
Laura Kaloi, Council of Parent Attorneys & Advocates and Natl. Center  
for Special Education in Charter Schools

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*The Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD) is the largest coalition of national organizations working together to advocate for federal public policy that ensures the self-determination, independence, empowerment, integration and inclusion of children and adults with disabilities in all aspects of society. The Education Task Force of CCD monitors federal legislation and regulations that address the educational needs of children and youth with disabilities and their families, including regulatory efforts under federal law such as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The Education Task Force advocates for high expectations for children with disabilities under these and other laws.*

