



**CONSORTIUM FOR CITIZENS
WITH DISABILITIES**

March 23, 2021

Dear Majority Leader Schumer, Speaker Pelosi, Chair Murray, Chair Scott, Chairwoman DeLauro, Chair Leahy, and Senators Hassan, Murphy, and Van Hollen:

The undersigned members of the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD) Education Task Force write to thank you for providing targeted funding for students with disabilities in the American Rescue Plan Act (HR 1319).

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. CCD is committed to ensuring that students with disabilities have every opportunity to succeed and that the educators who serve them are equipped with the resources and skills necessary.

States, districts, early intervention programs, and communities have gone without any targeted federal support for special education since Congress began approving stimulus funding for states and school districts during the COVID-19 pandemic. This is the first package recognizing this need by providing For special education, the relief package provides \$3 billion targeted to programs under the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act (IDEA). Specifically, the bill provides: \$2.5 billion for grants to states under Part B of the IDEA; \$200 million for preschool grants under Section 619 of IDEA; and \$250 million for programs for infants and toddlers with disabilities under Part C the law. Overall, the Rescue Plan provides \$130 billion in emergency funding to help schools reopen safely. We hope state and local school districts provide use some of these funds to assist students with disabilities to recover from lost opportunities to receive in-person special education and related services, such as speech and language and behavioral therapies.

Students with disabilities have been disproportionately impacted by this pandemic and the challenges with distance learning. These funds will help provide critical funding to help these students get the help they will need to recover from months of lost learning, to address to large number of students currently unidentified for special education, early interventions, related services as well as structural needs such as technology for connectivity.

The COVID-19 pandemic has illuminated the impact of the historic and continuous gross underfunding of IDEA and the great strain that this underfunding places on state and local education systems. State budget cuts and teacher layoffs have and will continue to exacerbate the existing critical shortage of special education teachers. To help states meet their obligations and provide school leaders and educators with resources to provide educational services and supports to students served under the IDEA, we urge Congress to support efforts to authorize a glidepath to full funding for IDEA, such as proposed in the recently introduced the *Keep Our Promise to America's Children and Teachers (PACT) Act* ([S.72](#) & [H.R. 764](#)). Congress must also invest additional funds IDEA Part C programs; Section 619 programs; and Part D personnel preparation.

Thank you again for including targeted funding for IDEA in the American Rescue Plan. We look forward to assisting in making sure these funds are used as intended and to working with you to secure additional funding to assist states in providing critical educational services to students with disabilities.

Sincerely,

Education Task Force Co-Chairs:

Kim Musheno, Autism Society of America kmusheno@autism-society.org

Meghan Whittaker, National Center for Learning Disabilities mwhittaker@nclld.org

Aaron Goldstein, Learning Disabilities Association of America

Laura Kaloi, Council of Parent Attorneys & Advocates and Natl. Center lkaloi@stridepolicy.com for
Special Education in Charter Schools

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.

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