



May 26, 2017

The Honorable Rodney P. Frelinghuysen Chairman
House Appropriations Committee
H-305, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nita Lowey, Ranking Member
House Appropriations Committee
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tom Cole, Chairman
House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education
2368-B Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro, Ranking Member
House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Frelinghuysen, Chairman Cole, Ranking Member Lowey and Ranking Member DeLauro:

On behalf of the Education Taskforce of the Consortium of Citizens with Disabilities (CCD) which represents the over six million students with disabilities who receive services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) across the country, we write to extend our sincere appreciation for your support of students with disabilities.

We are grateful for your comments to Secretary DeVos this week expressing concern with the President's proposed funding level for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in the Fiscal Year 2018 budget. We agree that increasing funding for all of IDEA would help schools and teachers provide the services, supports, intervention and instruction that students need. Due to the threat of massive cuts to Medicaid from both the President's FY 18 budget and the cuts to Medicaid found in the House version of America's Health Care Act, increased funding of IDEA is of even greater importance. We urge you to do all you can to increase funding for all of IDEA.

Over 80 percent of students with disabilities spend more than 60 percent of their school day in the regular classroom.ⁱ Because of this access to the general curriculum and the teamwork between schools and parents, more students are graduating from high school with regular diplomas, entering post-secondary education and the workforce as well as living full and enriching lives. Yet, far too many students are not graduating high school, receiving career training, entering college and working in integrated and competitive employment. Continued stagnation of IDEA funding to states is unacceptable.

Since 2011, the number of children with disabilities served under IDEA increased each year, with increases exceeding 1.5 percent annually during the 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 school years. The U.S. Department of Education has stated that it cannot reliably estimate whether this trend is expected to continue and in the absence of more certain information has projected the numbers of children with disabilities expected to be served for fiscal years 2016 through 2018 at 6.8 million, the same level reported by States for the 2015-2016 school year.ⁱⁱ Also, funding data show that IDEA [and Title I] have lost 8 percent of its purchasing power since 2010. With additional funding, more resources could be directed to schools serving large numbers of disadvantaged students — schools which are often under-resourced and struggling — to ensure that students have access to high-quality teachers, rigorous coursework, and the supports necessary for them to succeed.ⁱⁱⁱ And, finally, Chairman Cole’s excellent question regarding the impact of the U.S. Supreme Court Ruling in *Endrew F. vs Douglas County School District* on the resources needed to serve students with disabilities with more than minimal support is on point. We know students with disabilities do and can succeed when they are held to the same high expectations and receive the supports and services they need; however, states need more funding to make this a reality for more children.

Please act on the bipartisan support for students with disabilities and assure increased funding is provided so that students with disabilities can receive a high quality public education. If we can provide any further information or support in your efforts, please do not hesitate to get in touch. Thank you again for your work on the Appropriations Committee.

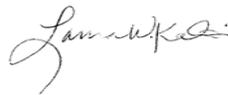
Sincerely,



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ⁱ U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2016). *Digest of Education Statistics, 2015* (NCES 2016-014), Chapter 2.

ⁱⁱ U.S. Department of Education, Fiscal Year 2018 Budget Justifications (May 2017). Retrieved at: <https://www2.ed.gov/about/overview/budget/budget18/justifications/h-special-ed.pdf>

ⁱⁱⁱ Reich, D., Cho. C. et al, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, Unmet Needs and the Squeeze on Appropriations: Policymakers Should Continue Bipartisan Sequestration Relief, (May 19, 2017). Retrieved at: http://www.cbpp.org/research/federal-budget/unmet-needs-and-the-squeeze-on-appropriations#elementary_secondary