CONSORTIUM FOR CONSTITUENTS WITH DISABILITIES

November 6, 2026

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Room S-128 Capitol Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Room S-128 Capitol Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Robert Aderholt
House Committee on Appropriations
H-307 Capitol Bldg.
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
House Committee on Appropriations
1036 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair Capito, Ranking Member Baldwin, Chair Aderholt, and Ranking Member DeLauro,

As you work toward a final version of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2027 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies (LHHS) Appropriations Act, the Consortium for Constituents with Disabilities (CCD) Education Task Force respectfully requests that you include ample funding for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and safeguards that will ensure fair and impactful distribution of funds and oversight of the law.

The CCD Education Task Force advocates for federal funding, legislation, and regulations that address the educational needs of the 10.25 million infants, toddlers, children and youth with disabilities and their families, including the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504), and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

IDEA is a bedrock law that ensures equal educational opportunities for all children with disabilities. This law and the related education and access programs, highlighted in our April 2026 letter to Appropriators[1], require robust federal support to help states meet IDEA's requirements and support individualized educational access and pathways to employment for people with disabilities. To ensure positive outcomes for infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities, their families, and the educators and service providers who support them, a strong federal Department of Education (ED) is

[1] https://c-c-d.org/fichiers/CCD-Education-Appropriations-FY-27.docx.pdf

imperative. Thus, in both the April 2026 letter and a subsequent August 2026 letter to Appropriators[2], CCD stressed the need to preserve the U.S. Department of Education and prohibit its unlawful dismantling through support of bipartisan bills S. 5046 and H.R. 10232, and additional efforts to preserve ED's Office for Civil Rights.

Since August, we have witnessed further erosion of ED through the transfer of authority for IDEA and vocational rehabilitation administration, state oversight, and compliance. This has led to more than 100 personnel from the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) being detailed to the Department of Health and Human Services and staff in the Office for Civil Rights moving to the Department of Justice despite bipartisan Congressional opposition and outcry from our community. We are also aware of an alarming uptick in the practice of frontloading federal grants, resulting in a significant reduction in the national reach of competitive education grants. Frontloading, or concentrating funding among a smaller number of awards, is particularly ominous for the federal programs that support children with disabilities. Programs including IDEA Part D and the National Center for Special Education Research have made significant contributions ranging from transformational research, technical assistance, and preparing special educators.

If, for example, ED extends the practice of frontloading awards to the IDEA Part D Personnel Preparation program in FY 2027 and future competitions, it could significantly diminish the program's ability to address ongoing shortages of special education personnel nationwide. Chronic shortages of special education personnel continue to affect the vast majority of states, reflecting a longstanding workforce challenge that has persisted for decades. The most recent National Center for Education Statistics School Pulse Panel data indicate that 34% of public schools reported being understaffed in special education in October 2024, while 72% of schools with special education teaching vacancies reported difficulty filling them with fully certified teachers in August 2024. Part D programs play a major role in building and sustaining the personnel pipeline. This is particularly salient for low-incidence disability specialty areas (e.g., training mobility experts, interpreters, guide dogs, etc.), where there may only be a few educator preparation programs or technical assistance centers nationwide. A narrower investment strategy will shrink the pipeline of professionals entering the field, exacerbating existing workforce shortages and limiting the availability of qualified personnel needed to deliver the specialized instruction, supports, and services that children with disabilities rely upon to succeed.

It has become clear that annual funding is not enough to protect and support IDEA and all of its programs. Thus, in addition to robust funding, we urge you to include clear guardrails in the FY 2027 appropriations bill to ensure that IDEA funds are awarded through a fair, merit-based process that is consistent with congressional intent, a prohibition on frontloading grants meant to be competed

[2] https://c-c-d.org/fichiers/CCD-Education-TaskForce-FY27-Appropriations-Request.pdf

across multiple fiscal years, and that oversight is retained by the OSERS education experts who understand the law. It is imperative that Congress assert its oversight authority and prohibit the illegal dismantling of ED and the reduction and destabilization of competitive grants.

Infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities, their families, the educators and service providers who serve them, and taxpayers deserve confidence that federal investments are being administered fairly and directed toward improving outcomes for the students these programs are intended to serve. Thank you for considering our additional requests.

Sincerely,

Access Ready, Inc.
Allies for Independence
American Association of People with Disabilities
American Music Therapy Association
American Physical Therapy Association
American Physical Therapy Association Academy of Pediatric Physical Therapy
American Speech-Language-Hearing Association
American Therapeutic Recreation Association
Assistive Technology Industry Association (ATIA)
Association of University Centers on Disabilities
Autism Society of America
Autistic Self Advocacy Network
Autistic Women & Nonbinary Network
Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder
CommunicationFIRST
Council for Exceptional Children
Council for Learning Disabilities
Council of Parent Attorneys and Advocates (COPAA)
Cure SMA
Disability Belongs®
Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund
Division for Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children (DEC)
Epilepsy Foundation of America
Learning Disabilities Association of America
Muscular Dystrophy Association
National Association of School Psychologists
National Center for Learning Disabilities

National Down Syndrome Congress
National PLACE
National Rehabilitation Association
Perkins School for the Blind
SSWAA (School Social Workers Association of America)
The Advocacy Institute
The Arc of the United States
The Center for Learner Equity
Tourette Association of America

CC:
The Honorable Susan Collins (R-ME)
The Honorable Patty Murray (D-WA)
The Honorable Tom Cole (R-OK)

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