



June 28, 2017

The Honorable Roy Blunt, Chairman
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education
260 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray, Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education
154 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

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

As you work to finalize the FY 2018 appropriations bill for the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD) Education Task Force writes to urge you to support the highest possible spending levels for programs that support America's 6 million children and youth with disabilities and the educators who work on their behalf.

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. To support these goals, CCD urges the following:

- **IDEA Part B – Grants to States:** CCD urges you to provide \$13 billion – \$1 billion above the FY 2017 level – to account for several years of stagnant funding for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act while the cost per child and the number of children served have continued to rise. Please reject the President's proposal which would cut IDEA Part B by \$113 million.
- **IDEA Part C:** CCD calls on Congress to fund the IDEA Part C Grants for Infants and Families at \$527.33 million, a 15 percent increase to enable states to further develop comprehensive early intervention systems for children ages birth through two years who have, or at risk of having disabilities or developmental delays and their families.

- **IDEA Part B Section 619 Preschool Grants to States:** CCD asks Congress to fund the IDEA Part B Section 619 Preschool Grants at \$423.47 million, a 15 percent increase to ensure that preschool children with disabilities ages 3 through 5 are identified early and receive a free appropriate public education.
- **IDEA Part D – National Activities to Improve Education of Children with Disabilities Program:** Part D is the mechanism for ensuring that the educational and developmental practices used in schools and community-based settings under the formula grant programs of IDEA (Part B and Part C) are the best our nation offers. Part D provides the critical infrastructure and training necessary to drive improvements in all aspects of early intervention and special education through professional development and technical assistance. Part D supports financial assistance for future special educators, early interventionists, researchers, and specialized instructional support personnel -- an essential activity due to decades-long national shortage of special educators, particularly in rural and urban areas. Part D assists personnel preparation programs, states, and districts to implement evidence-based practices. It also assures parents have the training, information and resources they need to meet the educational needs of their child with a disability. Part D also supports a competitive grant program that supports free access to electronic textbooks to over 450,000 school age students with print disabilities. CCD recommends the following funding levels for Part D:
 - **Media and Technology** – \$30 million
 - **Personnel Preparation** – \$90 million
 - **State Personnel Development** – \$46 million
 - **Technical Assistance and Development** – \$50 million
 - **Parent Training Information Centers** – \$30 million
- **National Center for Special Education Research (NCSER) within the Institute of Education Sciences:** CCD supports restoring funding for NCSER to its 2011 funding level of \$70 million. NCSER is one of four centers within the Institute of Education Sciences and supports a comprehensive research program to promote the highest quality and rigor in research on special education and related services, and to address the full range of issues facing children with disabilities, parents of children with disabilities, school personnel, and others. Its findings help inform interventions, teaching strategies, and other critical factors in educating children with disabilities.
- **Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education:** CCD urges Congress to fund OCR at \$130 million and to not to make the cuts proposed by the President. The Office for Civil Rights is responsible for enforcing laws that prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, and age in all programs and institutions that receive funds from the Department.
- **Model Transition Programs for Students with Intellectual Disabilities into Higher Education:** CCD recommends continued level funding of \$12 million for the model transition programs for students with intellectual disabilities (TPSIDs) under the Office of Postsecondary Education. These programs lead to greatly increased rates of employment and independent living for young adults with intellectual disabilities.
- **ESSA Title I:** CCD recommends an increase of funding for Title I to \$16 billion to support public schools striving to implement the newly reauthorized law.

- **ESSA Title II**: CCD recommends funding Title II at FY 2017 level of \$2.056 billion to continue a strong investment in creating profession-ready educators and reduce the dramatic teacher shortage facing our country in

Providing students with disabilities inclusive educational opportunities with high expectations and access to rigorous coursework is directly linked to better employment outcomes, higher wages and lower unemployment that provide opportunities for true community integration. The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that in 2013 someone without a high school diploma earned 27 percent less than a person with a diploma, and 57 percent less than a person with a bachelor's degree. Therefore, we urge appropriations negotiators to invest in the education of students with disabilities by providing key funding for IDEA and ESSA as recommended.

Thank you for considering our views as you finalize the FY 2018 appropriations bill for the Departments of Labor, HHS, Education and Related Agencies.

Sincerely,

ACCSES

The Advocacy Institute

American Dance Therapy Association

American Foundation for the Blind

American Music Therapy Association

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association

The Arc of the United States

Association of University Centers on Disability

Autistic Self Advocacy Network

Brain Injury Association of America

Council of Administrators of Special Education

Council of Learning Disabilities

Council of Parent Attorneys and Advocates

Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund

Division for Early Childhood, Council for Exceptional Children

Easterseals

Higher Education Consortium for Special Education

IDEA Infant Toddler Coordinators Association

Institute for Educational Leadership

Judge David L. Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law

Learning Disabilities Association of America

Matt Cohen and Associates

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)

National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities

National Association of School Psychologists

National Association of State Directors of Special Education

National Association of State Head Injury Administrators

National Center for Learning Disabilities

National Disability Rights Network

National Down Syndrome Congress

National PTA

Perkins School for the Blind

School Social Work Association of America

TASH

Teacher Education Division of the Council for Exceptional Children

The Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities is a coalition of national consumer, advocacy, provider and professional organizations headquartered in Washington, D.C. Since 1973, the CCD has advocated on behalf of people of all ages with physical and mental disabilities and their families. CCD has worked to achieve federal legislation and regulations that assure that the 54 million children and adults with disabilities are fully integrated into the mainstream of society. For additional information, please contact:

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