



**CONSORTIUM FOR CITIZENS  
WITH DISABILITIES**

May 29, 2014

Todd Rokita  
Chair, Early Childhood, Elementary, and  
Secondary Education Subcommittee  
236 Cannon House Office Bldg.  
Washington, DC 20515

Cathy McMorris-Rodgers  
Chair, House Republican Conference  
203 Cannon House Office Bldg.  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Rokita and Representative McMorris-Rodgers:

On behalf of Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities Education Task Force, we write today regarding the Creating Hope and Opportunity for Individuals and Communities through Education Act (The CHOICE Act). Title II of the bill would allow states to distribute funding received by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) directly to parents of students with disabilities to pay for educational services provided at private schools. We believe this policy is not needed for several reasons.

First, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) guarantees each eligible child a free, appropriate, public education. Since IDEA was first established in 1975, tens of millions of children with disabilities received education services tailored to meet each child's unique needs. These services have been provided in a public school or with public funds at a private school when the public school could not guarantee it could meet a particular child's needs. For such children in private placement, their education services are provided at no cost to their parents.

Second, a private school has no legal requirement to meet a child's unique needs. Parents that place their children in private schools have no recourse if the school does not meet their child's educational needs. Parents forfeit important rights, legal protections, and services normally guaranteed by IDEA. A child is not guaranteed an individualized education program that is designed to meet the child's unique needs, as is provided in the public school system.

Finally, the CHOICE Act will divert tax dollars away from public schools at a time when public education needs more support from all sectors of our society.

Millions of children with disabilities have realized their dreams to be full participants in society because of the services and protections provided to them by IDEA. Thank you for considering our views, and working to ensure students with disabilities receive the education they are entitled to receive.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Lindsay Jones'.

Lindsay Jones

Katy Beh Neas

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Katherine Beh Neas'.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Cindy Smith'.

Cindy Smith

cc: Members, House of Representatives

The Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities is a coalition 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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