

December 7, 2005

## Dear Member of Congress:

As part of the Administration's Federal Emergency Management Agency's Disaster Relief Fund, the President has asked the Congress to consider his request to rescind \$2.3 billion from "lower-priority" federal programs. One of the programs targeted for a funding rescission is contained in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA).

The State Personnel Development Grants were authorized when IDEA was signed into law in December 2004. The purpose of these grants is to support high-quality, intensive pre-service preparation and professional development for all personnel who work with children with disabilities. The grants are also designed to ensure that school personnel have the skills and knowledge necessary to improve the academic achievement and functional performance of children with disabilities, including the use of scientifically based instructional practices, to the maximum extent possible. In light of concerns regarding the achievement of students with disabilities under the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) and the deadline for meeting the highly qualified teacher requirements of both NCLB and IDEA quickly approaching, these grant funds are desperately needed by the states. We find it hard to believe that one year after Congress voted overwhelmingly in favor of this law, these grants are now considered to be a "low priority."

Research shows that highly qualified teachers and related services providers are key to the academic success of students, including those with disabilities. It is unconscionable that this Administration would completely rescind funding for a program whose sole purpose is to prepare highly qualified teachers, related services personnel, and administrators. We strongly urge you to maintain this program at its current level of funding at \$51 million. Thank you for your consideration.

## Sincerely,

Alexander Graham Bell Association for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing American Association on Mental Retardation American Counseling Association American Dance Therapy Association American Occupational Therapy Association American Physical Therapy Association

American Society for Deaf Children

Association of University Centers on Disabilities

CHADD - Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/ Hyperactivity Disorder Conference of Educational Administrators of Schools and Programs for the Deaf

Council for Learning Disabilities

Council of Parent Attorneys and Advocates

Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation

Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund

Division for Learning Disabilities of the Council for Exceptional Children

Early Childhood Division of the Council for Exceptional Children

Easter Seals

Helen Keller National Center

Higher Education Consortium for Special Education

IDEA Infant Toddler Coordinators Association

Learning Disabilities Association of America

NAMI (The National Alliance on Mental Illness)

National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities

National Association of Private Special Education Centers

National Association of School Psychologists

National Association of State Directors of Special Education

National Center for Learning Disabilities

National Coalition on Deaf-Blindness

National Disability Rights Network

National Down Syndrome Congress

National Down Syndrome Society

National Rehabilitation Association

Rehabilitation Engineering and Assistive Technology Society of North America

Teacher Education Division of the Council for Exceptional Children

The Arc of the United States

**Tourette Syndrome Association** 

**United Cerebral Palsy** 

American Occupational Therapy Association

The Arc of the U.S.

**Easter Seals** 

United Cerebral Palsy