



Congress Must Reject House Budget Reconciliation Bills Which Harm Children with Disabilities

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Washington, DC- This week, the House Ways & Means Committee and the House Energy and Commerce Committee have proposed budget reconciliation bills that include provisions harmful to children with disabilities. Specifically, the House Ways & Means bill includes a \$20 billion proposal diverting public funds to private schools via the Educational Choice for Children Act (ECCA) which CCD has opposed. While language was added to reference students with disabilities and accessing “equitable services” – as allowed under current law to ensure public school districts reserve some special education funding for parentally placed children in private schools- the bill does not add any new protections. Similarly, the House Energy and Commerce bill would cut Medicaid by over \$700 billion.

CCD’s concerns relate to shifting taxpayer dollars through a tax credit to fund scholarships (aka vouchers) to any non-public school, primarily because the recipient schools are not required to adhere to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and other federal education and civil rights laws. Recipient schools are also known to reject or reconsider proposed admission to students who may require specialized instruction, education services and supports, or accommodations. Thus, when parents use vouchers or other private choice mechanisms, unless explicitly protected, they forfeit important rights, legal protections, and services guaranteed by IDEA, often without their knowledge. These schools are also not required to ensure students meet state-set standards in reading, math, science, and graduation, as expected for all other schools under the nation’s general education law.

Medicaid is a critical support for infants, toddlers and youth with disabilities. States rely on Medicaid to finance IDEA Part C early intervention services for children from birth to age two who qualify for both programs; about half of young children who are served by Part C (nearly 250,000 infants and toddlers) are also enrolled in Medicaid. Additionally, Medicaid is the fourth largest funding stream for public schools providing reimbursement for many of the supports and services a student needs to access their education such as physical, occupational or speech therapy, or assistive technology. Cutting funding to Medicaid while simultaneously diverting funds away from public schools will leave states and school districts to make impossible choices about which children to serve.

Despite the disability community’s request of Congress to fully fund the IDEA in support of all school districts, and to keep Medicaid intact, the House majority party has proposed to spend \$20 billion for a voucher scheme that does not support all children and will pay for it with devastating and intractable cuts to Medicaid causing children with disabilities to lose access to critical screening, early intervention, services, therapies, assistive technology, and more.

CCD calls upon Congress to SUPPORT all children with disabilities and REJECT the House budget reconciliation bills. CCD regularly partners with Congress in support of students with disabilities and welcomes any opportunity to assist in the development of legislation that includes and protects all children and their families.

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The CCD Education Task Force leads, advocates for, and monitors federal legislation and regulations that address the educational needs of children and youth with disabilities and their families, including policy efforts affecting the funding and implementation of federal laws such as IDEA, Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), Section 504, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). We advocate for high expectations for children with disabilities under these and other laws.