

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-2302

March 23, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Steny Hoyer
Majority Leader of House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader of House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Majority Leader Hoyer, and Minority Leader McCarthy:

We write to urge that, while considering options to help localities and school districts amid the COVID-19 pandemic, additional funding for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) be included in said package.

The original version of IDEA was enacted to ensure that all students with disabilities receive a free and appropriate public education. IDEA provides individual-specific programs, resources, and services for students with a wide range of disabilities, including hearing impairment, autism, language impairment, and learning disabilities. Currently, there are over 7 million children eligible for special education services under the disability categories of the IDEA. The comprehensive assessment and support services authorized by IDEA help to close the academic achievement gap and help prepare these students for further education, employment, and independent living.

When IDEA passed, the federal government made a pledge to states and school districts to pay 40 percent of the Average Per Pupil Expenditure in IDEA Part B grants to states. We have always fallen short of this commitment, with regular appropriations for IDEA Part B never reaching above 19.4 percent (never reaching 20%). Fiscal year 2019 funding was just 14.3 percent, which still falls short in meeting the federal promise to students and their families.

This continued shortfall is exacerbated during this time of state-wide school shutdowns and an increase in distance learning. Significant funding in this next aid package for IDEA would help relieve budget pressures and provide much needed support for our teachers and school

administrators who are working tirelessly to continue to educate all students in our communities through equal access to quality education.

As parents and teachers do their best to continue the education of students with learning challenges, we implore you to provide additional funding for special education. Despite changing classroom settings, education for students with disabilities cannot be compromised. Additional funding for IDEA will allow teachers and parents to continue to provide a high-quality education at home while meeting benchmarks for students, no matter how they learn. Now is the time to renew our commitment to our students and educators. Our teachers and administrators are working around the clock to continue to provide the highest possible levels of care for all students.

While the House considers legislation that benefits our school districts and local governments, we ask for support for IDEA. Thank you for your kind consideration. We look forward to seeing your response.

Sincerely,



Angie Craig
Member of Congress

Pete Stauber
Member of Congress



Jared Huffman
Member of Congress

Signatories

Brian Fitzpatrick
Nydia M. Velázquez
Peter A. DeFazio
Rashida Tlaib
Alan Lowenthal
Mike Thompson
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