

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

June 7, 2005

The Honorable Ralph Regula
Chairman
House Labor, HHS, and Education
Appropriations Subcommittee
B308 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable David Obey
Ranking Member
House Labor, HHS, and Education
Appropriations Subcommittee
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington DC 20515

Dear Chairman Regula and Ranking Member Obey:

In 1975, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) was enacted into law to ensure that students with disabilities receive the quality education they deserve. With this legislation came a promise to federally fund 40 percent of special education costs - this promise has yet to be honored. For nearly 30 years, the lack of adequate federal funding has unfairly burdened local school districts and taxpayers struggling to meet the education needs of all students, including a growing number of students with disabilities.

Last year the House of Representatives approved and the President enacted, the Improving Education Results for Children with Disabilities Act, laying a clear glide path to attaining full federal funding. Over the next five years, the amount of federal funding would incrementally increase until the full 40 percent was reached in FY 2011. This commitment was agreed to by an overwhelming majority in both the House and Senate, yet we were still unable to meet the goal we established for the first year of the glide path.

As you prepare your Fiscal Year 2006 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education appropriations bill, please honor our commitment and include \$14.65 billion for the Part B grants-to-states, the amount authorized in the law. This funding would put the federal government back on track toward fully funding its share of IDEA costs. While we recognize the challenges and tough decisions you face in the current fiscal climate, we believe that increased IDEA funding actually allows our local communities to devote scarce resources that are being spent to meet the federal requirements of the IDEA law to other areas of need. Even during this time of tight budgets and need for fiscal constraint, we must help ease the pressure that special education puts on state and local budgets.

We look forward to working with you on this critical matter and are hopeful that our efforts will help ease the strain on our local communities.

Sincerely,

Charles F. Bass

Mike Ferguson

Paul Van Hall
R Simmons

Pat Kelly

Tom Gole

Richard Lynch

Michael H. Pugh

Jim O'Connell

Mike Doyle

Jim H. [unclear]

John A. [unclear]

Tommy Baldwin

Donna Sanders

Bob Gooding

Mark Egan

Mayor Kennedy

Tom Lantz

John [unclear]

John [unclear]

Jim [unclear]

Jim Marshall

Melina Bean

Todd R. [unclear]

Don [unclear]

Chris [unclear]

T. [unclear]

Ed [unclear]

David [unclear]

Lewis Naughton

Carine Brown

Bob Furrer

Barb Stewart

Carolyn B. Moberg

John Lee

Donis O. Matsui

Alvin M. Rangan

Dennis J. Kucinich

Jim Mue

Gene S. Robinson

Henry K. Garcia

Neil Armstrong

Quentin Beckwith - The Donnell

Mike McIntyre

Nancy G. Giron

Edwise Smith

Gerold Halls

Bunfin

Eliza E. Cummings

Ken Tan

Frank L. Engel

O.A. Dutch Ruppensberger

Pat Stewart

Randy Hudel

Paul M. Higgins

Lynne Carberry

Red Strickland

Tim Ryan

Ken Kord

Jim M's Bennett

Pat Clark

Tom White

Eric Cano

Mike Row

Pat A Brady

Jim Mastand

James P. [unclear]

John W. Hight
Jim. Doug Clay

Mark L. ...
Ed Case

Robert ...

Jan ...

Barbara ...

Sam ...