Support Emergency IDEA Funding

Each day, we are given new information about COVID-19, causing us to alter our plans a little more — it’s overwhelming and hard to keep up to date. We hope you are able to take care of yourself and those close to you.

At the same time, our federal government is busy reviewing potential stimulus bills and trying to find ways to support education. Their work and direction are moving...
quickly and turns on a dime — also very hard to track. However, that’s exactly what we are doing.

CEC staff, board members, and policy advisers are actively engaging with Congress to ensure the educator voice is represented. We are talking with partner organizations, Congressional staffers, and committee liaisons.

Because things are moving so quickly, we are being selective about the need to engage our grassroots network. But please know that we are advocating for additional support for teachers NOW, and are being very vocal about any action by Congress that may result in undoing the right children with exceptionalities have to a free, appropriate public education.

**And now we need your help.** We are asking Congress to provide a one-time infusion of emergency funds for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in a stimulus bill in order to directly target and support the need of states, school districts, and educators. Click [here](#) to **TAKE ACTION** in our Legislative Action Center and ask Congress to prioritize funding education for students with disabilities. Using our Center, you can easily send a letter to your representatives. If you prefer, a sample letter is below.

In the coming days, we will monitor progress on future stimulus activity and engage you as is appropriate. Please continue to follow CEC on social media and watch for alerts from us as we work to represent your voice on Capitol Hill. We are in this together.

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**Act now!**

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**Sample Letter:**

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Jennifer Lesh,  
President

Chad Rummel,  
Executive Director
As your constituent and an educator in the field of exceptionalities, I write to urge you to provide a one-time infusion of emergency funds for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in a stimulus bill in order to directly target and support the need of states, school districts and educators.

Despite the many pressing stressors, educators across the country are committed to serving all students during the COVID-19 crisis, including students with disabilities. It is imperative that you provide more resources to support school personnel in providing remote, online and/or tele-education to students with exceptionalities.

Specifically, I ask that you support the following increases to IDEA:

**IDEA Part B: Invest $11.3 Billion**

Over six million school-aged students, approximately 13% of the total student enrollment, are currently required to benefit from individualized special education and related services mandated by IDEA. Unfortunately, the historical underfunding of IDEA combined with the pandemic has placed a great strain on education systems, which are now being forced to make difficult budget decisions which include ceasing all education services to all children, including children with exceptionalities. Congress must help states meet their obligations and provide school leaders and educators with resources to provide educational services and supports to students.

**IDEA Part C - Invest $500 million; IDEA Part B Section 619 - Invest $400 million:**

IDEA’s early childhood programs serve over 1 million infants, toddlers and preschool children with disabilities and their families through Part C and Part B Section 619, respectively. Over the last twenty years, both programs have increased the number children served by approximately 50% and have proven that this early intervention leads to improved outcomes. These children and their families will require extra support as they navigate important developmental milestones with their children including for 3-year old children transitioning from Part C to preschool programs.

**IDEA Part D Personnel Preparation Grant Program: Invest $300 million**

IDEA’s Part D focuses on preparing personnel, disseminating information, providing resources to families and utilizing technology. This is the only program supporting educator preparation for special educators. Given the existing shortage of special
educators and the new needs of students that the crisis demands, Congress must support states in developing emergency programs to train and certify educators.

The above programs are critical to me personally and to my school and district as we develop solutions to teach and support students with exceptionalities during the COVID-19 crisis. Special education must be reinforced to ensure that these programs do not get sacrificed by states and counties when budgets become strained. Please make the education of children with exceptionalities a top investment.

Thank you for considering this request. I look forward to receiving your response.