

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 18, 2014

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama,

As you craft your budget for fiscal year 2015, we write to recommend a significant increase in federal funding for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

The IDEA provides individual-specific programs and services for students with a wide range of disabilities, including hearing impairment, autism, language impairment, and learning disabilities. Currently, there are over 6.5 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 ensure a meaningful education for every student.

We owe it to all students to provide a quality education that will help them graduate and enter successful careers. Under Part B of IDEA—the main component of the law for school children ages 3-21—the federal government committed to contributing 40 percent of the average per pupil expenditure (APPE) for each special education student. However, we have always fallen short of this commitment, with funding for IDEA Part B never reaching above 18.5 percent. This shortfall exacerbates the long-running challenges facing states and local school districts, which are faced with decreasing federal resources, rising special education costs, and growing student populations. Ultimately, this situation shortchanges all students because this federal funding shortfall strains state general funds.

The federal government needs a plan to move us toward full funding for IDEA. This should begin with incremental increases, beginning in fiscal year 2015, in spending. Full federal funding for IDEA will help deliver an appropriate education for children with disabilities and provide necessary support to our teachers and school administrators who are working tirelessly, with limited resources, to better the lives of all students.


In addition to the request of increased FY15 funds for the IDEA program, we propose a renewed partnership with the Administration to consider reauthorization of the Act and identify a plan to reach full funding for IDEA over the next ten years.


Please do not hesitate to contact our offices with any questions. We look forward to hearing your thoughts on how best to increase federal funding for IDEA for the coming fiscal year and in the future.

Sincerely,


Jared Huffman
Member of Congress


David McKinley
Member of Congress



Jared Polis
Member of Congress



Gregg Harper
Member of Congress

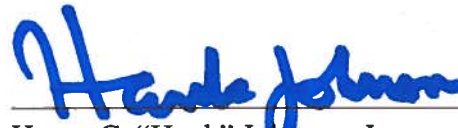

Elijah Cummings
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Bobby Rush
Member of Congress

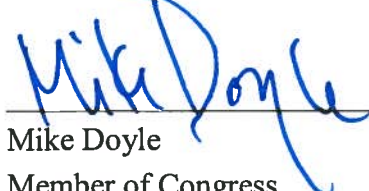

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Lois Capps
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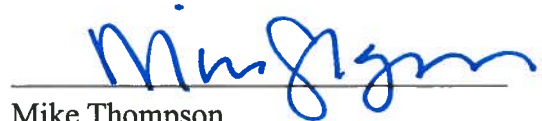
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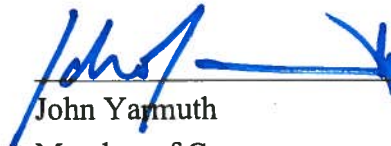
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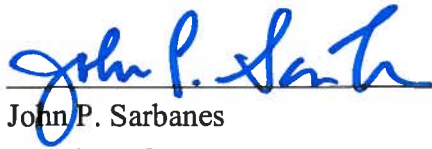
Joe Courtney
Member of Congress



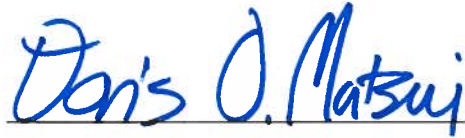
Mark Takano
Member of Congress



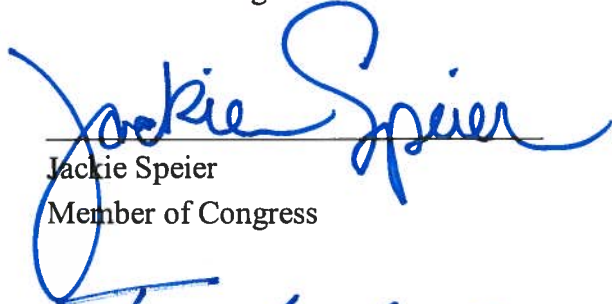
James P. Moran
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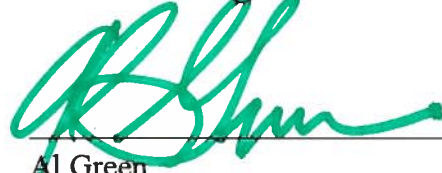
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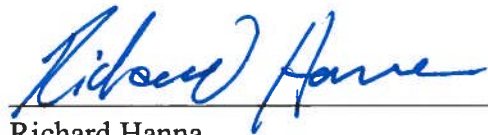
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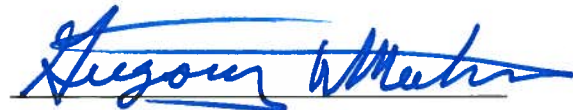
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Richard Hanna

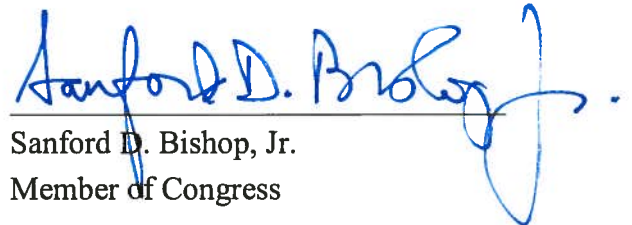
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Donna M. Christensen

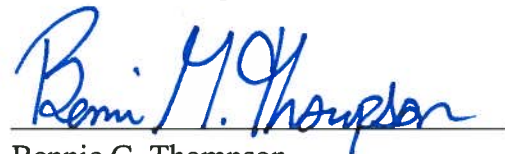
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Gregory W. Meeks

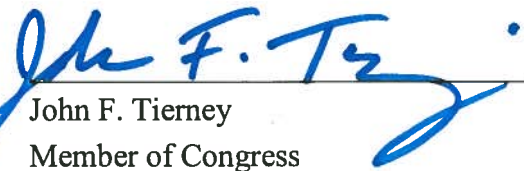
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Sanford D. Bishop, Jr.

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Maxine Waters

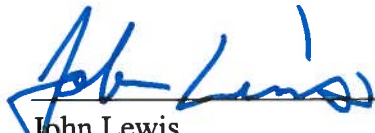
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Gloria Negrete McLeod

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Brian Higgins

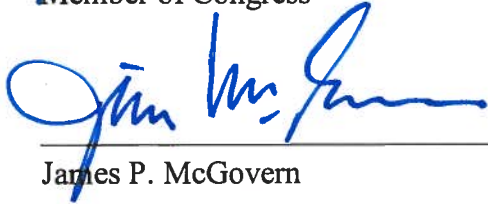
Member of Congress



John Lewis
Member of Congress



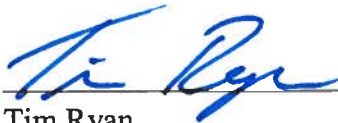
Don Young
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James P. McGovern
Member of Congress



André Carson
Member of Congress



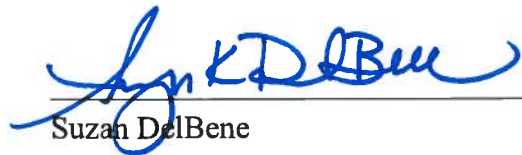
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Rick Larsen
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Suzan DelBene
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Dina Titus
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Julia Brownley
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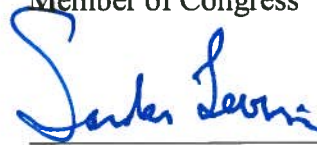
Rush Holt
Member of Congress



Theodore E. Deutch
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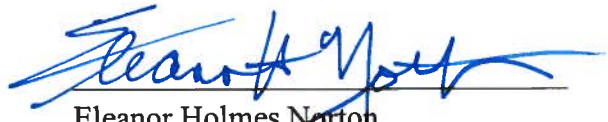
Matt Cartwright
Member of Congress



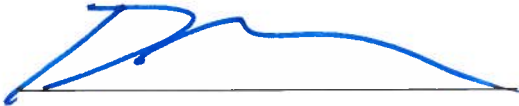
Lois Frankel
Member of Congress



Katherine Clark
Member of Congress



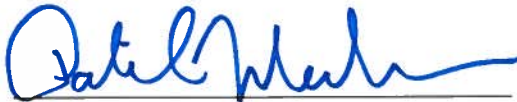
Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



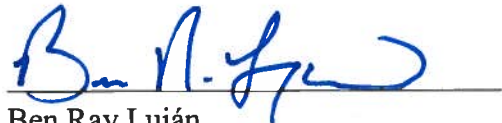
Patrick Murphy
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Patrick Meehan
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Ben Ray Luján
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Yvette Clarke
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Dutch Ruppersberger
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Eliot Engel
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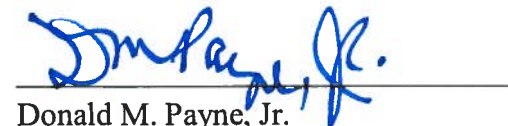
Paul Tonko
Member of Congress



Keith Ellison
Member of Congress



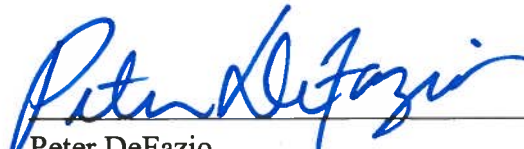
Bill Pascrell, Jr.
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Donald M. Payne, Jr.
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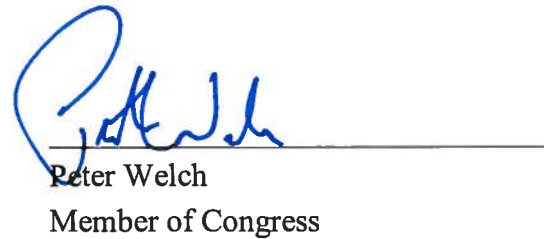


Peter DeFazio
Member of Congress



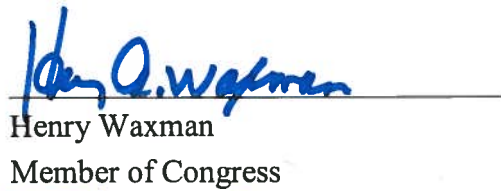
Debbie Wasserman Schultz
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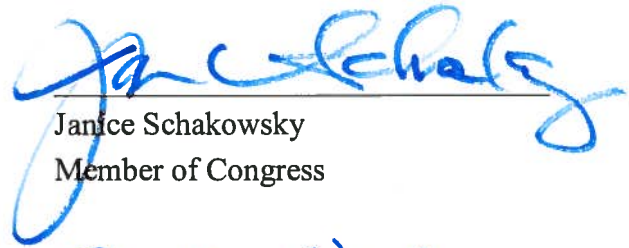

Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress

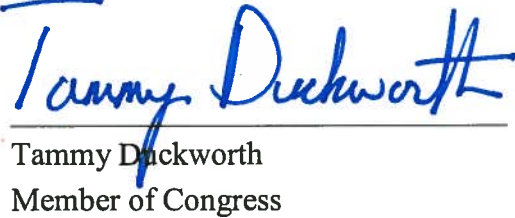

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Judy Chu
Member of Congress

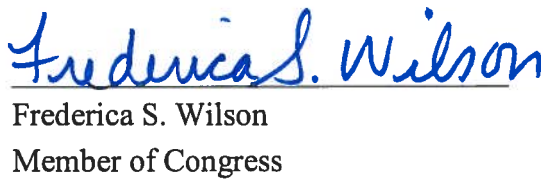

Zoe Lofgren
Member of Congress

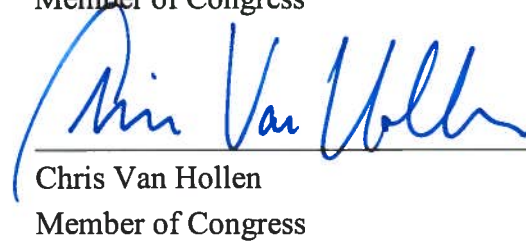

Henry Waxman
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Janice Schakowsky
Member of Congress

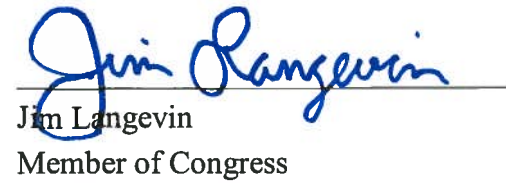

Tammy Duckworth
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Marcia L. Fudge
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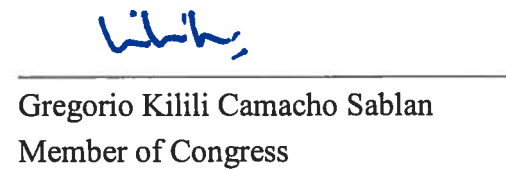

Frederica S. Wilson
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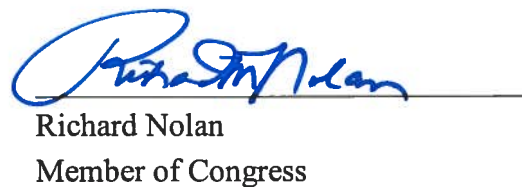

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Jim Langevin
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Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan
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Christopher Gibson
Member of Congress


Richard Nolan
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Susan Davis
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Derek Kilmer
Member of Congress



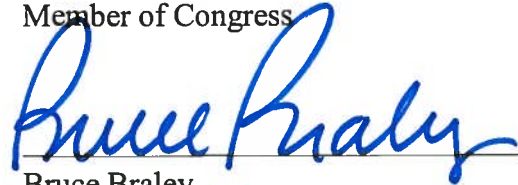
Carolyn McCarthy
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Tim Bishop
Member of Congress



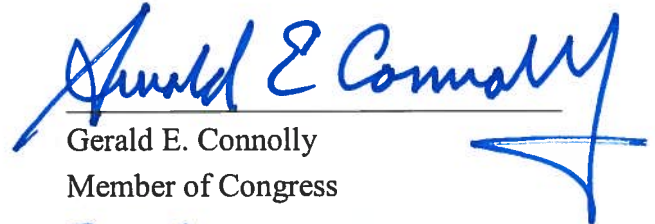
Gene Green
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Bruce Braley
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Alan Lowenthal
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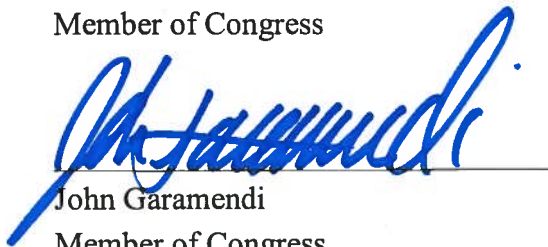
Gerald E. Connolly
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Collin Peterson
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Michael E. Capuano
Member of Congress



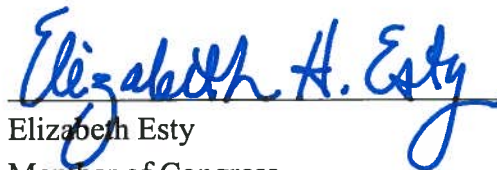
John Garamendi
Member of Congress



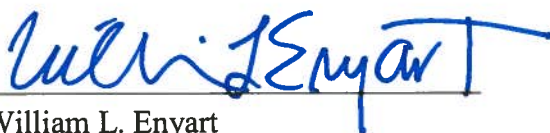
Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress



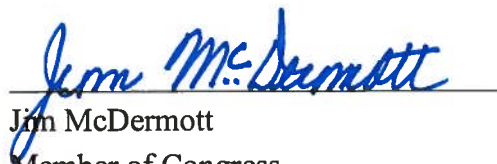
Beto O'Rourke
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Elizabeth Esty
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William L. Enyart
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Jim McDermott
Member of Congress



Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress



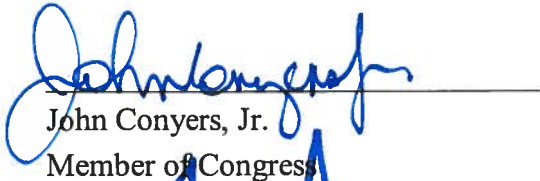
Scott Peters
Member of Congress



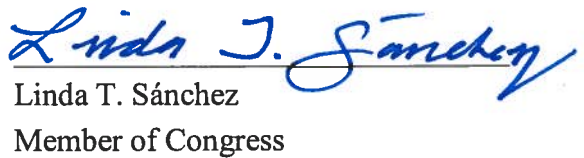
Charles B. Rangel
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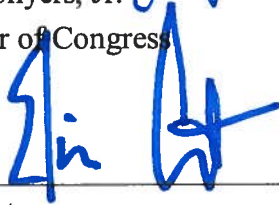
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Cheri Bustos
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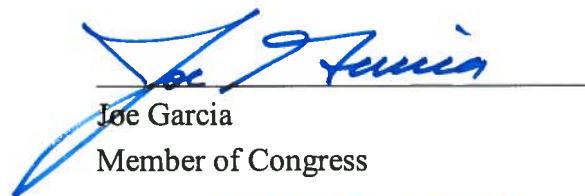
Wm. Lacy Clay
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Ron Kind
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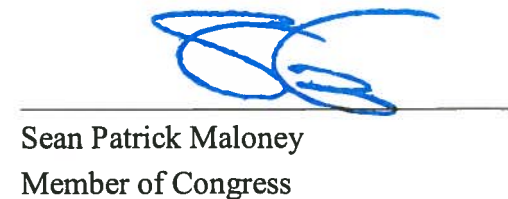
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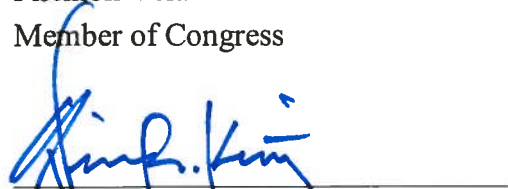
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Steve Cohen
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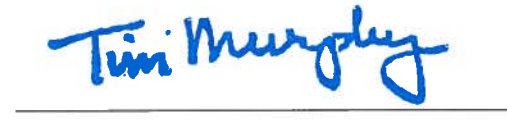

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