

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 23, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
United States Capitol
H-232
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
United States Capitol
H-204
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Leader McCarthy:

Thank you for your efforts so far in addressing the unprecedented impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on our nation's education system. Though educational support was made available to schools and states through the CARES Act, there is an immediate need for designated special education emergency funding. To address this gap, we are requesting \$13 billion in funding for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), including in the form of the Part B grants-to-states program, in the next coronavirus relief package. This funding will ensure that schools can properly support students with disabilities, whose access to a quality education continues to be increasingly vulnerable due to the nature of this pandemic.

When IDEA became law in 1975, 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. But while bipartisan work has been done to increase that amount over the past two years, current levels still fall short in meeting the federal promise to students and their families.

While the classroom environment has shifted, a school's responsibility to provide necessary and legally guaranteed services and support for students with disabilities has not changed. The challenge of providing high-quality distance education to students with disabilities was made even more difficult by IDEA's chronic underfunding in the regular appropriations process. Schools are now also preparing to mitigate the impacts from the loss of, or limited, services and supports for their students with disabilities as they transition into summer learning and the upcoming school year, but these efforts carry unexpected costs that their yearly IDEA budgets could not have previously accounted for.

So far, guidance issued by the Department of Education has upheld the core tenets of IDEA for schools, which protects the rights of students with disabilities in the classroom during the pandemic, whether that is in person or online. Dedicated funding would assist schools in their mission to fully support students with disabilities with individualized services that are tailored to meet the needs of each student and uphold their rights under IDEA. Providing set-aside IDEA

funding in the next relief package would also demonstrate the commitment of Congress and the Department of Education to providing essential support to students with disabilities.

We thank you for your continued support for our schools and students, and we look forward to working with you to ensure we are providing an accessible and quality education to students of all abilities.

Sincerely,



Jimmy Panetta
Member of Congress



Jared Huffman
Member of Congress



David B. McKinley, P.E.
Member of Congress



Brian Fitzpatrick
Member of Congress



Dean Phillips
Member of Congress



Angie Craig
Member of Congress

/s/
Terri A. Sewell
Member of Congress

/s/
Bennie G. Thompson
Member of Congress

/s/
Gilbert R. Cisneros, Jr.
Member of Congress

/s/
Nanette Diaz Barragán
Member of Congress

/s/
Gwen Moore
Member of Congress

/s/
Jesús G. "Chuy" García
Member of Congress

/s/
John Garamendi
Member of Congress

/s/
Peter T. King
Member of Congress

/s/
Thomas R. Suozzi
Member of Congress

/s/
Sean Patrick Maloney
Member of Congress

/s/
Max Rose
Member of Congress

/s/
Dina Titus
Member of Congress

/s/
Suzanne Bonamici
Member of Congress

/s/
Joseph P. Kennedy, III
Member of Congress

/s/
Joe Neguse
Member of Congress

/s/
Lori Trahan
Member of Congress

/s/
Debbie Dingell
Member of Congress

/s/
Don Young
Member of Congress

/s/
Nydia M. Velázquez
Member of Congress

/s/
Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress

/s/
Adam Smith
Member of Congress

/s/
Alan Lowenthal
Member of Congress

/s/
Rashida Tlaib
Member of Congress

/s/
Jahana Hayes
Member of Congress

/s/
Chrissy Houlahan
Member of Congress

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Peter Welch
Member of Congress

/s/
Grace F. Napolitano
Member of Congress

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Steven Horsford
Member of Congress

/s/
Kathleen M. Rice
Member of Congress

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Seth Moulton
Member of Congress

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Susan Wild
Member of Congress

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Zoe Lofgren
Member of Congress

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Mark DeSaulnier
Member of Congress

/s/
Mike Levin
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Adam B. Schiff
Member of Congress

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Jim Costa
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/s/
John Yarmuth
Member of Congress

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Andy Kim
Member of Congress

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Peter DeFazio
Member of Congress

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Bill Foster
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Susie Lee
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William R. Keating
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Anthony Brindisi
Member of Congress

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Sharice L. Davids
Member of Congress

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Brendan F. Boyle
Member of Congress

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Julia Brownley
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Ro Khanna
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Jackie Speier
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Danny K. Davis
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Katie Porter
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Cheri Bustos
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Kurt Schrader
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Linda T. Sánchez
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Josh Gottheimer
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Adriano Espaillat
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Anna G. Eshoo
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Steve Cohen
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Jason Crow
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Ted W. Lieu
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Mike Thompson
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Suzan K. DelBene
Member of Congress

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Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress

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Haley M. Stevens
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Diana DeGette
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Conor Lamb
Member of Congress

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Harley Rouda
Member of Congress

/s/
Abby Finkenauer
Member of Congress