

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 10, 2011

The Honorable Daniel Inouye  
Chairman  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Thad Cochran  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Harkin  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS and Education  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Richard Shelby  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS and Education  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen and Ranking Members:

We respectfully request you provide the highest possible funding for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in the Labor-HHS-Education appropriations bill for fiscal year 2012.

For too long, Congress has failed to live up to our commitment to fund 40 percent of the national average per pupil expenditure of every child in special education. Outside of the one-time infusion of funds included in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, the federal government has never come close to meeting this commitment, not even reaching 20 percent in three decades. This continued underfunding – in combination with current state fiscal crises and the cessation of ARRA IDEA dollars – forces school districts to either raise taxes or dip into general education budgets to make up for the shortfall. The result is a reduction in other essential services and a shortchanging of all students.

Our nation's public schools and the students they serve cannot afford to wait any longer for the relief they so desperately need. Beyond continued investment in federal education funding, we must make IDEA funding a priority this year.

Thank you for your consideration of our views on this important matter.

Sincerely,



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Paul Reul  
J. Test

Steve Durbin

Jay Rockefeller

Frank R. Lautenberg

Chuck Sch

Jeffery A. Merkley

Al Franken

Debbie Stabenow

Herb Kohl

Jim Johnson

Daniel K. Akaka

Tom Udare

Bruce Bly

Ben Sanders

Ron Wyden

J. Webb

Kirsten E. Gillibrand

Patrick Leahy

Paul Leun

John F. Kerry

Ben Cardin