



**CONSORTIUM FOR CITIZENS
WITH DISABILITIES**

August 31, 2011

(Addressed to the 12 Members of the Joint Special Committee)

Dear Senator/Representative:

The undersigned members of the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD) urge you to support the following principles as you craft language and instructions for cutting the nation's deficit. We recognize that there are many difficult decisions ahead for our nation and that you share our goal of getting the nation's finances on the right path without causing irreparable harm to our most vulnerable citizens.

CCD believes that:

- The budget should be balanced without detriment to people with disabilities, for whom government services and supports are vital to their ability to remain healthy, employed, educated and independent in their communities.
- Any modifications to entitlement programs on which people with disabilities depend for their health, long-term supports and income security as their lifeline, such as Medicaid, Medicare, Social Security, Supplemental Security Income and veterans disability compensation and pension benefits, must not result in reduced access to needed services either directly, through eligibility restrictions or benefit cuts, or indirectly, through inadequate provider reimbursement rates.
- Deficit reduction strategies must reflect a thoughtful, balanced approach and include all aspects of the federal budget in order to protect people with disabilities. Any plan must include an analysis of how it will impact people with disabilities of all ages and other vulnerable populations.
- The process undertaken by the Joint Special Committee should be transparent with opportunity for public input.

The Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities is a broad coalition of national organizations working together to advocate for national public policy that ensures the education, self determination, independence, empowerment, integration and inclusion of children and adults with disabilities in all aspects of society.

We look forward to working with you through the process ahead and appreciate your attention to our concerns. Thank you.

Sincerely,

American Association of People with Disabilities
American Association on Health and Disability
American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities
American Counseling Association
American Council of the Blind
American Foundation for the Blind
American Medical Rehabilitation Providers Association
American Music Therapy Association
American Network of Community Options and Resources
American Physical Therapy Association
American Psychological Association
APSE – The Network on Employment
Association of Assistive Technology Act Programs
Association of Programs for Rural Independent Living (APRIL)
Association of University Centers on Disabilities
Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law
Brain Injury Association of America
Conference of Educational Administrators of Schools and Programs for the Deaf
Council for Exceptional Children
Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation
Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund
Division for Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children
Easter Seals
Epilepsy Foundation
Family Voices
Goodwill Industries International
Health & Disability Advocates
Higher Education Consortium for Special Education
IDEA Infant Toddler Coordinators Association
Learning Disabilities Association of America
Lutheran Services in America Disability Network
Mental Health America
National Alliance to End Homelessness
National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities
National Association of Disability Representatives
National Association of Private Special Education Centers
National Association of State Directors of Special Education
National Association of State Head Injury Administrators
National Center for Learning Disabilities
National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare
National Council on Aging
National Disability Institute
National Disability Rights Network
National Down Syndrome Congress
National Down Syndrome Society

National Multiple Sclerosis Society
National Organization of Social Security Claimants' Representatives
National Rehabilitation Association
National Respite Coalition
Paralyzed Veterans of America
School Social Work Association of America
The Advocacy Institute
The Arc of the United States
The Daniel Jordan Fiddle Foundation
Tourette Syndrome Association
United Cerebral Palsy
United Spinal Association