

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 2, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Steny Hoyer
Majority Leader of House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Speaker of House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Majority Leader Hoyer, and Minority Leader McCarthy:

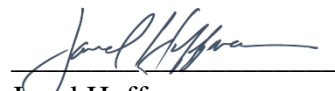
We write to thank you for your work to include special education efforts in the CARES Act. While this measure makes progress towards getting states the help they need to weather this crisis, the federal government can do more to ease burdens on state budgets. The COVID-19 pandemic reinforces the challenges that underfunding of special education creates even in normal times, which is why now we must take swift action to fully fund special education in future COVID-19 response packages.

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.

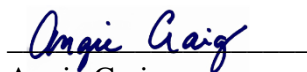
This funding disparity is especially acute now during the COVID-19 pandemic. As schools move to remote learning, the resources promised by the federal government in IDEA are even more essential. The CARES Act is a step in the right direction, but it is necessary that IDEA receives its own designated set aside in any future packages. The comprehensive assessment and support services authorized by IDEA help to close the academic achievement gap and help prepare these students for further education, employment, and independent living. Educators are working overtime to assure their students with disabilities are still receiving a quality and appropriate education, but the challenges to meet this goal are even greater with online learning. Now, more than ever, it is incumbent upon the federal government to provide these resources for special needs students.

While the House deliberates legislation that benefits our school districts and local governments, we ask that you include fully funding IDEA. Thank you for your kind consideration. We look forward to working together on crafting bold legislation to help our fellow Americans during this time of crisis.

Sincerely,



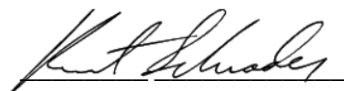
Jared Huffman
Member of Congress



Angie Craig
Member of Congress



Brian Fitzpatrick
Member of Congress



Kurt Schrader
Member of Congress



Joe Neguse
Member of Congress



David B. McKinley, P.E.
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