

ISSUE BRIEF

ENSURE FULL FUNDING FOR THE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT



ACTION REQUESTED

Cosponsor the IDEA Full Funding Act (H.R. 4519/S. 2217), which would make funding for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) mandatory and put it on a 10-year path to cover 40% of the average per pupil expenditure for educating students with disabilities.



SOLUTION:

Cosponsor the IDEA Full Funding Act (H.R. 4519/S. 2217)



ISSUE:

Current IDEA Funding is Insufficient

When Congress passed the precursor to IDEA, it committed to providing 40% of the cost for special education from the federal government. Because there is no dedicated funding for IDEA, the amount of funds provided by the federal government is subject to annual fluctuations.

Congress must fully fund special education to ensure that children with disabilities receive the free appropriate public education they are entitled to under law.

- The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act was enacted into law to ensure that students with disabilities, including students with communication disorders, have access to a free appropriate public education. The program currently serves more than 7.5 million children in our nation's schools.
- Speech and language disorders are the second most prevalent disability category served under IDEA Part B
- 35.8% of students ages 3-5
- 17.8% of students ages 6-21
- For 2023, total federal funding for IDEA Part B state grants is about \$14.2 billion and represents less than 13% of the average per pupil expenditure.
- Flat and unpredictable annual funding of the IDEA program threatens the ability to deliver a free appropriate public education for students with disabilities and leaves states with unfunded federal mandates.
- The additional funding that states must provide to make up the difference leaves less money to recruit and retain educational audiologists and speech-language pathologists in schools, keep salaries competitive, and hire additional staff.
- When states are unable to recruit and retain qualified professionals, the remaining staff are expected to assume additional caseload and workload responsibilities (such as an increase in the number of students), perform assessments, develop individualized education programs (IEPs), and complete paperwork.

The IDEA Full Funding Act would move federal funding for IDEA from discretionary to mandatory spending; thereby, requiring regular increases in IDEA spending and ensuring that needed funds would be provided every year. It would establish a 'glidepath' over a 10-year period to increase IDEA funding until it covers 40% of the average per pupil expenditure for students with disabilities.

