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March 19, 2012

The Honorable Denny Rehberg
Chairman, Appropriations Subcommittee
on Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education and Related Agencies
2358B Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
House Appropriations Subcommittee on
Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education and Related Agencies
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Rehberg and Ranking Member DeLauro:

I write to encourage you to increase funding for Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2013 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies Appropriations Act.

In 1975 Congress mandated educational access and services for students with special needs, with the promise that significant federal investments would support states and school districts in meeting their obligations. This precursor to IDEA, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act, authorized federal funding up to 40 percent of the additional cost of educating students with disabilities, but federal contributions have never approached that goal.

Congress did, however, make significant progress in FYs 1995 through 2005. Large increases in Part B funding during those years more than doubled the federal contribution to the cost of educating students with disabilities, from 7.8 percent to 18.5 percent. Regrettably, recent years have brought steady decreases in the federal contribution. In FY 2012, the federal government is covering just 16.3 percent of the national average per pupil expenditure – and the Obama administration's FY 2013 proposal would reduce that contribution even further, to 15.8 percent.

I appreciate your interest in addressing this problem. Under your leadership, the Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies proposed a \$1.2 billion increase for IDEA Part B in FY 2012, which would have increased the federal contribution to more than 17 percent. Unfortunately, the U.S. Senate and the Obama

administration elected instead to dedicate these funds toward pet projects, unauthorized programs, or programs with no track record for success, such as Race to the Top, Investing in Innovation, School Improvement Grants, and Striving Readers, among others.

As our nation struggles with trillion-dollar deficits and debt that has eclipsed the size of the entire U.S. economy, difficult choices must be made. We must stop wasting taxpayer dollars on new and ineffective programs and instead work toward meeting our basic obligation to support students with disabilities and ensure these students are prepared for success after high school.

Thank you for your consideration of this request and for your continued commitment to this effort. I stand ready to work with you in this invaluable endeavor.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Kline". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "J".

JOHN KLINE

Chairman

House Committee on Education and the Workforce