



November 23, 2020

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Chair,
Appropriations Subcommittee on
Labor, HHS, Education & Related Agencies
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member,
Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, HHS,
Education & Related Agencies
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Blunt and Ranking Member Murray:

As you work to finalize the Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 appropriation bill for the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services and Education (L-HHS-ED), the National Center for Learning Disabilities (NCLD), which represents the 1 in 5 individuals with learning and attention issues, urges you to put children, their families, and schools first by increasing spending levels for the programs that support them.

Children with learning and attention issues have brain-based issues that may cause trouble in reading, writing, math, organization, concentration, listening comprehension, social skills, motor skills or a combination of these. These children are in every classroom across the country and spend most of their time in general education settings, while many also received specialized instruction and support through our nation's special education program. Research confirms that when provided the right services and supports, children with learning and attention issues can and do thrive in school and life. Yet, our nation's schools are struggling to serve these students during the pandemic and need urgent relief from the federal government. We urge you to adopt the following recommendations in your FY 2021 bill.

Maintain Funding for & Report Language on LD Research

We were pleased to see that both the House and Senate FY2021 Labor-HHS-ED bills included report language supporting the use of National Institute of Health (NIH) funds for learning disabilities (LD) research and we encourage you to include this in the final FY2021 bill. The Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute for Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) within NIH has been the leading source of funding for LD research for decades and has yielded groundbreaking research in the science of reading and other areas. The U.S. House of Representatives recognized the importance of this research and included report language in their respective funding bill. NCLD strongly urges the Committee to acknowledge the valuable

research these Centers and Innovation Hubs produce and encourage NICHD to increase investments for these entities with the following report language:

Learning Disabilities Research.—The Committee is concerned with the decline in achievement for students with disabilities and recognizes the need for continued research and improved interventions. The Committee recognizes the importance of NICHD’s funding of Learning Disabilities Research Centers and Learning Disabilities Innovation Hubs, which are the only source of Federal funding available to researchers interested in exploring child development and learning disabilities to conduct randomized control trials and explore the relationships between different variables at work. While learning disabilities affect an individual’s education and academic achievement, these disorders are brain-based, and clinical research using the latest technology and advances in neuroscience is essential. The Committee encourages NICHD to continue its robust research into language, reading development, learning disabilities, and disorders that adversely affect the development of listening, speaking, reading, writing, and mathematics abilities. The Committee also encourages NICHD to increase its investment in its Learning Disabilities Research Centers and Learning Disabilities Innovation Hubs.

We urge you to continue supporting NIH and NICHD in Fiscal Year (FY) 2021. Specifically, as NIH continues to see increases in its annual appropriation, we urge you to maintain an investment in NICHD and its Learning Disabilities Research Centers’ (LDRCs)/Innovation Hubs Program, which have received approximately \$8M per year in 5-year grant cycles over the last 25+ years

Increase Funding for Critical Education Programs

Furthermore, to support students with learning disabilities, their parents, and the educators who work with them, NCLD urges you to put forward a funding bill that increases investments in our public schools through the following programs:

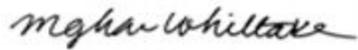
- Increase **Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part B Grants to States** to at least \$13.97 billion;
- Increase **IDEA Part B Section 619** to at least \$441.8 million;
- increase **IDEA Part C** to at least \$531 million;
- Increase **IDEA Part D** to at least \$254 million;
- Increase **Title I in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)** to at least \$16.76 billion;
- Increase **Title II in ESSA** to at least \$2.556 billion;
- Increase **Title III in ESSA** to \$980 million;
- Increase **Title IV Part A in ESSA** to \$1.6 billion;
- Increase **Title IV Part B in ESSA** to \$1.35 billion;
- Increase **Title IV - Part E in ESSA** to \$20 million; and

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- Increase the **Institute of Education Sciences** to at least \$670 million, including at least \$70 million for National Center for Special Education Research (NCSEER).

Thank you for your consideration and NCLD looks forward to working with Congress as you move forward with the FY 2021 appropriations process. Please feel free to contact me at mwhittaker@nclld.org with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,



Meghan C. Whittaker
Director of Policy & Advocacy
National Center for Learning Disabilities