



April 23, 2021

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Chair,
Appropriations Subcommittee on
Labor, HHS, Education & Related Agencies
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tom Cole
Ranking Member,
Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, HHS,
Education & Related Agencies
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman DeLauro and Ranking Member Cole,

As you work to finalize the Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 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 receive specialized instruction and support through our nation's special education program (the Individual with Disabilities Education Act, or IDEA). 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 and will continue to face challenges during and beyond the pandemic. There is a great need for continued investment from the federal government. We urge you to adopt the following recommendations in your FY 2022 bill.

Maintain Funding for & Report Language on LD Research

We were pleased to see that the final FY 2021 bill included report language supporting the use of National Institute of Health (NIH) funds for learning disabilities (LD) research. 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 last year. 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 again this year with the following report language:

Learning Disabilities Research.—The Committee is increasingly concerned with the decline in achievement for students with disabilities and recognizes the need for continued research and improved interventions, particularly in light of the COVID-19 crisis which has led to significant loss of in-person instruction for many students. 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 do have an effect on an individual’s education and academic achievement, these disorders are brain-based and so clinical research using the latest technology and advances in neuroscience is essential. Therefore, in order to continue 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 urges 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) 2022. 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

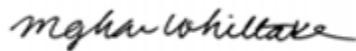
Furthermore, to support students with learning disabilities, their parents, and the educators who work with them, NCLD urges you to put forward a funding bill that increases investments in our public schools through the following programs:

- Increase **Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part B Grants to States** to at least \$15.5 billion;
- Increase **IDEA Part B Section 619** to at least \$598 million;
- Increase **IDEA Part C** to at least \$732 million;
- Increase **IDEA Part D** (National Activities) in the following amounts:
 - State Personnel Development: \$42 million
 - Technical Assistance and Development: \$47 million
 - Personnel Preparation: \$300 million
 - Parent Training and Information Centers: \$33 million
 - Media and Technology: \$33 million
- Increase **Title I in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)** to at least \$36.5 billion
- Increase **Title II in ESSA Part A** to at least \$3 billion;

- Increase **Title II in ESSA Part B** to at least \$500 million
- Increase **Title III in ESSA** to \$2 billion;
- Increase **Title IV Part A in ESSA** to \$2 billion;
- Increase **Title IV Part B in ESSA** to \$2.5 billion;
- Increase **Title IV - Part E in ESSA** to \$20 million;
- Increase the **Institute of Education Sciences** to at least \$700 million, including at least \$70 million for National Center for Special Education Research (NCSEER); and
- Increase funding for the **U.S. Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights to Office** to \$144 million.

Thank you for your consideration and NCLD looks forward to working with Congress as you move forward with the FY 2022 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