



December 7, 2005

Dear Member of Congress:

As part of the Administration's Federal Emergency Management Agency's Disaster Relief Fund, the President has asked the Congress to consider his request to rescind \$2.3 billion from "lower-priority" federal programs. One of the programs targeted for a funding rescission is contained in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA).

The State Personnel Development Grants were authorized when IDEA was signed into law in December 2004. The purpose of these grants is to support high-quality, intensive pre-service preparation and professional development for all personnel who work with children with disabilities. The grants are also designed to ensure that school personnel have the skills and knowledge necessary to improve the academic achievement and functional performance of children with disabilities, including the use of scientifically based instructional practices, to the maximum extent possible. In light of concerns regarding the achievement of students with disabilities under the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) and the deadline for meeting the highly qualified teacher requirements of both NCLB and IDEA quickly approaching, these grant funds are desperately needed by the states. We find it hard to believe that one year after Congress voted overwhelmingly in favor of this law, these grants are now considered to be a "low priority."

Research shows that highly qualified teachers and related services providers are key to the academic success of students, including those with disabilities. It is unconscionable that this Administration would completely rescind funding for a program whose sole purpose is to prepare highly qualified teachers, related services personnel, and administrators. We strongly urge you to maintain this program at its current level of funding at \$51 million. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Alexander Graham Bell Association for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
American Association on Mental Retardation
American Counseling Association
American Dance Therapy Association
American Occupational Therapy Association

American Physical Therapy Association
American Society for Deaf Children
Association of University Centers on Disabilities
CHADD - Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/ Hyperactivity Disorder
Conference of Educational Administrators of Schools and Programs for
the Deaf
Council for Learning Disabilities
Council of Parent Attorneys and Advocates
Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation
Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund
Division for Learning Disabilities of the Council for Exceptional Children
Early Childhood Division of the Council for Exceptional Children
Easter Seals
Helen Keller National Center
Higher Education Consortium for Special Education
IDEA Infant Toddler Coordinators Association
Learning Disabilities Association of America
NAMI (The National Alliance on Mental Illness)
National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities
National Association of Private Special Education Centers
National Association of School Psychologists
National Association of State Directors of Special Education
National Center for Learning Disabilities
National Coalition on Deaf-Blindness
National Disability Rights Network
National Down Syndrome Congress
National Down Syndrome Society
National Rehabilitation Association
Rehabilitation Engineering and Assistive Technology Society of North America
Teacher Education Division of the Council for Exceptional Children
The Arc of the United States
Tourette Syndrome Association
United Cerebral Palsy
American Occupational Therapy Association
The Arc of the U.S.
Easter Seals
United Cerebral Palsy