

July 19, 2019

The Honorable Roy Blunt  
260 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Blunt:

On behalf of the Missouri Speech-Language-Hearing Association (MSHA), I urge you to consider increasing the funding for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part B State Grants to \$13.97 billion, which includes an increase to \$441.8 million for IDEA's Part B Section 619, and an increase to \$531 million for IDEA Part C Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities in the fiscal year (FY) 2020 appropriations bill. It is the duty of Congress to fulfill its commitment to fund 40% of the average per-pupil expenditure in public elementary and secondary schools.

In addition to funding IDEA, please consider the following report language to help reduce the large administrative burden of duplicative paperwork experienced by school-based providers who utilize IDEA funds and bill Medicaid:

*The Committee recognizes that unnecessary and redundant paperwork often constrains and compromises the quality of special education services and that steps should be taken to reduce administrative barriers for providing health services in and in coordination with schools. The Committee strongly recommends that the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services within the Department of Education coordinate with the Center for Medicaid and CHIP Services within the Department of Health and Human Services' Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services to develop trainings and provide technical assistance to assist with billing and payment administration for Medicaid services in schools and reduce the total paperwork burden for school-based clinicians who utilize IDEA funds and bill Medicaid.*

MSHA serves as the state association representing audiologists, speech-language pathologists, speech, language, and hearing scientists and related personnel associated with professional speech, language, and hearing therapy services. More specifically, to provide leadership, to perform membership services, and to advocate for rights of people with communication disorders.

IDEA serves more than 6.5 million children in our nation's schools and upholds the vision of a free, appropriate public education for all children - including students with disabilities such as communication disorders. Infants and toddlers with disabilities (birth to 2 years old) and their families receive early intervention services under IDEA Part C, and children and youth (ages 3-21) receive special education and related services under IDEA Part B. IDEA provides important protections for children with disabilities that must not only be maintained but also strengthened.

Thank you for your efforts on this important area of education. Increasing funding for the program is a significant step in fulfilling the promise Congress and our nation made to children with disabilities. If you or your staff have any questions, please contact me at [msha@showmemsha.org](mailto:msha@showmemsha.org).

Sincerely,

*Jacob Gutshall*

Jacob Gutshall, MHS, CCC-SLP  
MSHA President 2018-2019