

Nearly 300 Advocates for Children and Youth With Exceptionalities “Stormed the Hill” During the 2019 Special Education Legislative Summit

Arlington, Va., July 15, 2019 — On July 10, 2019, 290 special and gifted education and early intervention professionals from 46 states rallied together in Washington, D.C., to advocate for children and youth with exceptionalities during the [2019 Special Education Legislative Summit](#).

Hosted each year by the Council for Exceptional Children and the Council of Administrators of Special Education (CASE), the 2019 Summit allowed advocates to share their stories with members of Congress about strengthening the provisions for children and youth with exceptionalities, free appropriate public education (FAPE) and early intervention services, robust funding for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and the Jacob K. Javits Gifted and Talented Students Education Act.

In their 276 meetings with members of Congress, advocates informed elected officials about the unique needs of children and youth with exceptionalities and urged them to:

- Fully fund IDEA and increase funding for the National Center for Education Research (NCSER) and Jacob K. Javits Gifted and Talented Students Education Act
- Cosponsor and support pending legislation in the House and Senate to fully fund IDEA Part C and Part B Section 619 (preschool) programs and the Child Care for Working Families Act, H.R. 1364 and S. 568
- Support efforts that maintain and enhance the use of public funds for public education and services offered throughout public school districts
- Support legislation to address the shortages of special education teachers and early intervention providers
- Support legislation to strengthen and enhance mental health services to children and youth with exceptionalities to build positive climates for learning





With “*Full IDEA Funding*” as their rallying cry, advocates were particularly inspired by the opportunity to join Representative Jared Huffman (D-CA), sponsor of the IDEA Full Funding Act, H.R. 1878, for a special briefing on the steps of the U.S. Capitol. At this unique rally event, Rep. Huffman praised the advocates for their work, while highlighting the critical need to jumpstart IDEA with \$14 billion in funding.



“The federal government has committed to contributing 40 percent of the average per pupil expenditure for each special education student, but we have never met this funding target,” said Representative Huffman. “That’s why I introduced the IDEA Full Funding Act, a bipartisan bill that would require regular increases in special education funding. This bill would help ensure students with disabilities receive the support and resources they need to help them prepare for further education, employment, and independent living.”





“Congressman Huffman is committed to funding bipartisan compromises and real solutions to pressing issues and reaches across the aisle to find common ground whenever possible,” said Cammie Nguyen, a Californian and special educator. “Our issues may not be easy, but they are worth it, and we are honored to have Congressman Huffman as an advocate.”

To stay informed about CEC’s advocacy work, visit the [Legislative Action Center](#) for the latest issues, action alerts, and opportunities to get involved 365 days of the year. You can also watch Rep. Huffman’s full speech to advocates on [CEC’s YouTube page](#).

The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) is the professional association of educators dedicated to advancing the educational success of children and youth with exceptionalities that accomplishes its mission through advocacy, standards, and professional development. Learn more about CEC at cec.sped.org.

The Council of Administrators of Special Education (CASE) is an international professional educational organization which is affiliated with the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) whose members are dedicated to the enhancement of the worth, dignity, potential, and uniqueness of each individual in society. The mission of CASE is to provide leadership and support to members by shaping policies and practices which impact the quality of education. Learn more about CASE at casecec.org.

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