

August 4, 2010

The Honorable Tom Harkin
731 Hart Office Building
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Harkin:

On behalf of the 40,000 educators from across the country including 350 in Iowa, who are members of the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) and the students they serve, **we strongly urge you to reinstate dedicated funding for the successful and cost-effective Jacob K. Javits Gifted and Talented Students Education Act during the appropriations process.**

We were disappointed to learn that under your leadership as the Chairman of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor-Health-Education, dedicated funding for the Javits Act was eliminated. At a time when our nation is struggling to remain internationally competitive, the Federal government should be doing more to support our nation's three million students with gifts and talents and the educators who work on their behalf.

Over the last twenty years, the Javits Act has impacted thousands of students, teachers and schools nationwide. Recently, as a Javits grantee, the University of Iowa led the effort in researching educational strategies for students who are twice-exceptional, meaning those who have a disability and are gifted. As you know, these children are often overlooked and misunderstood; therefore, they do not receive the services they need to reach their full potential. Javits is the only federal effort directed at helping these students. Indeed, it focuses on students who have been traditionally underrepresented in gifted education: those from low socioeconomic backgrounds, those with disabilities who may also be gifted (twice exceptional), and English language learners. Although it has received only a small amount of federal funding, \$7.5 million last year, the U.S. Department to Education deemed it effective and its impact has spanned thousands of students, teachers, and schools across the nation.

Funding the Javits Act is more important now than ever. Recent studies analyzing data from the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) have shown a growing "excellence gap" at the highest achievement levels between low income students and their more advantaged peers. Our nation is failing to serve high-ability, low income students. The Javits program directly addresses this issue by funding grants that help practitioners develop strategies to identify and serve students who traditionally have not had access to gifted education programs. Because of work done through the Javits program, teachers have been trained to better understand how to identify high ability in students and modify curriculum to meet their needs. Eliminating the dedicated funding stream for the Javits program, end this work.

Eliminating funding for Javits will also close the National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented. The mission of the center is to develop best practices, which have been disseminated

and implemented in schools across the nation. The loss of this resource will leave students, classroom teachers and school leaders without the support they need.

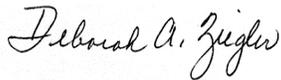
The Obama Administration, in its *Blueprint for Reform: Reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act* calls for increased access to gifted education. Efforts to eliminate the only federal program which researches and builds the knowledge base for students with gifts and talents runs counter to the Administration's proposal.

Despite the limited resources that Congress has provided, the Javits Act has functioned effectively. Indeed, many Javits grants have been brought to scale and implemented in school districts and states long *after* the grant funding ends. This limited federal investment has reverberated in classrooms, school districts and states across the country and it must remain.

For these reasons, CEC and its members urge you to maintain dedicated funding for the Javits Act as the appropriations process continues.

Please contact us with any questions by emailing debz@cec.sped.org or kimh@cec.sped.org or calling 703-264-9441. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



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