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July 24, 2013

Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health & Human Services, Education and Related
Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Our Mission
Working with and
Through our State
Associations, NSBA
Advocates for Equity
and Excellence in
Public Education
through School Board
Leadership

**Re: *FY2014 Labor-Health & Human Services-Education Appropriations
bill***

Office of Advocacy

David A. Pickler
President

Dear Representative:

Thomas J. Gentzel
Executive Director

On behalf of the 95,000 local school board members and the state school boards associations representing more than 49 million public school students throughout the nation, the National School Boards Association (NSBA) is writing to you concerning our disappointment with the FY2014 Labor-Health & Human Services-Education Appropriations bill. Local school boards have grave concerns over the Subcommittee's overall 302(b) funding allocation that would impose greater budget cuts to programs implemented at the local school district level. Local school boards are also concerned that federal funding to support K-12 education is being significantly reduced at a time when there should be increased investments in our nation's future.

Michael A. Resnick
Associate Executive Director

As you are aware, our school districts and communities are already affected by the sequester; and, in many communities, these cuts are coupled with funding reductions at the state level. Further, based on our estimates, if the reductions from the FY2014 Subcommittee allocation were to be applied across-the-board, it would result in more than a \$4.5 billion loss to Title I and special education (IDEA) alone. Such actions could be devastating for those eligible students who directly benefit from such services.

Specifically regarding IDEA funding, NSBA fully supports Chairman John Kline's letter to the Subcommittee on May 23, 2013, which encourages increased funding for Part B of IDEA. We are aware that across the nation, local school districts are continuing to face cuts to their operating budgets at a time when the costs for special education services continue to increase. As a result, local communities often are forced to either raise taxes or reduce allocations to general education programs to make up the shortfall in special education. In reviewing the FY2013 appropriations, the average federal support per student under IDEA dropped to 14.9 percent, the lowest level since 2001. Therefore, in order not to jeopardize the educational needs of our general education students, NSBA urges you to develop and remain committed to a path toward full funding of the federal commitment to IDEA promised almost 40 years ago.

NSBA also urges you to restore funding for Title I grants for disadvantaged students in the FY2014 bill, as well as other programs including teacher quality, career and technical education, and English Language Acquisition, which are critical to the success of our nation's students and school districts. Restoring baseline funding for

these priorities will help our school districts and states avoid reductions to the scope and delivery of education services. For example, a restoration of Title I funding would benefit an estimated 1.2 million students and 2,700 schools with services that have been substantially cut, especially for high-poverty schools. We believe that maintaining special services for disadvantaged students is key to closing achievements gaps.

In summary, we urge members of the House Appropriations Subcommittee to support the nation's future by increasing the federal investment in education - not reducing the federal investment. Such increased investments would enable all our schoolchildren to successfully compete in the workforce and ensure a stronger economic environment for our nation.

Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to working with you and your staff as the FY2014 appropriations process moves forward. Questions regarding our comments may be directed to Deborah Rigsby, Director of Federal Legislation at 703-838-6208; or by e-mail, drigsby@nsba.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Michael A. Resnick".

Michael A. Resnick
Associate Executive Director