



The Council of Parent Attorneys and Advocates, Inc.
A national voice for special education rights and advocacy

March 11, 2008

Senator Bernard Sanders
Unites States Senate
332 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington DC 20510

Re: Full funding for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

Dear Senator Sanders:

We write in strong support of your amendment to add \$10 billion to the budget for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

COPAA just celebrated its tenth anniversary. In those ten years we have worked to give parents, advocates, and attorneys the tools they need to ensure that the promises of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act are realized. One of those promises, full funding of IDEA, made in 1975, continues to elude our grasp. Your amendment takes us a big step closer.

COPAA's members see the effects of IDEA's unfunded mandate every day. Evaluations of our children are incomplete; IEPs call for inappropriate amounts of services; placements are inappropriate; accommodations and supports are inadequate or non-existent; providers of services across the board are overworked, undertrained, and under supervised. As a result children suffer, fail, and, in numbers disproportionate to their numbers in the overall school population, are disciplined and drop out. While this is not totally due to the lack of funds, the failure of the Federal government to provide full funding is part of the problem.

The time is now for full funding. Thank you for introducing this amendment.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Berlow, Chair
Jessica Butler Co-Chair
COPAA Government Relations Committee