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Speak Out to Protect Blind and Low Vision Students' Rights

1 message

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To: s.smith12.123@gmail.com

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 AFB logo: American Foundation for the Blind, expanding possibilities for people with vision loss

We Need You in the Fight

During this national period of quarantine due to the novel coronavirus, many US schools have instituted distance learning programs that allow students to continue their education at home.

However, last week, Republican Senator Lamar Alexander stated that the Department of Education should consider allowing states to choose not to educate students with disabilities during the quarantine. Specifically, he proposed that Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) issue waivers to states that would allow them not to comply with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) for one year.

The IDEA does not permit them the authority to waive these requirements. Due to that restriction, some Republican leaders in Congress are trying to get language in the upcoming COVID-19 relief package that would ask the Department of Education to send a report to Congress listing waivers they would like the authority to grant.

The American Foundation for the Blind urges you to contact these four critical Congressional offices to express your opposition to any legislation that weakens the rights of students with disabilities to receive educational services during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Sample script:

Good morning, my name is _____. I live in _____.

I am calling to express my opposition to any attempts by Congress or the Department of Education that weaken the rights of students with disabilities to receive educational services during the novel coronavirus pandemic.

Just as all kids do, students with disabilities need to maintain their reading and math skills so that they don't fall behind and they can advance into the next grade in the fall. They also need continued instruction in braille, technology, independent living skills, and orientation and mobility instruction.

Ignoring the needs of students with disabilities will only lead to them falling behind academically, less likely to graduate, and less likely to have the academic and life skills necessary to find employment. Education is critical for all children.

Contact Information:

US Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

Chairman Lamar Alexander (R-Tennessee)

Phone: (202) 224-4944

Email: www.alexander.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/email

Ranking Member Patty Murray (D-Washington)

Toll Free: (866) 481-9186

Email: www.murray.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/contactme

US House Committee on Education and Labor

Chairman Bobby Scott (D-Virginia)

Phone: (202) 225-8351

Email (only accepts emails from his district): bobbyscott.house.gov/zip-code-lookup?form=/contact/email-me

Ranking Member Virginia Foxx (R-North Carolina)

Phone: (202) 225-2071

Email (only accepts emails from her district): foxx.house.gov/connect/

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