



AMERICAN
SPEECH-LANGUAGE-
HEARING
ASSOCIATION

June 13, 2007

The Honorable David Obey
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Obey:

On behalf of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA), I would like to share our member's views on the FY2008 Department's of Labor, HHS, and Education Appropriations bill. Overall, we are very pleased with the significant increases provided for key programs such as Title I and the restoration of funding to many other programs. Our members are deeply disappointed, however, with the insufficient funding proposed for special education and cannot offer our full support of the bill unless it includes a significant improvement in this area.

As you may know, ASHA is the professional, scientific, and credentialing association for more than 127,000 members and affiliates who are speech-language pathologists, audiologists, and speech, language, and hearing scientists in the United States and internationally. Many ASHA members provide early intervention, preschool and school-based services to children with disabilities and their families under Parts B and C of Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Regrettably, the current bill falls far short on special education funding, essentially freezing funding at the FY2007 level. Under the subcommittee mark, the federal share of special education costs would remain at 17.2 percent. IDEA is the one program that touches virtually every school district in the nation. The 110th Congress should provide a real, meaningful increase in IDEA funding. There is no single more important step Congress can take to strengthen public education than to put IDEA on a path to full funding.

ASHA strongly supports the direction of the subcommittee mark. We hope the full committee will take steps to remedy the inadequate IDEA funding level. Thank you for your continuing attention to the needs of America's young children with disabilities and their families.

Sincerely,

Noma B. Anderson, Ph.D., CCC-SLP
President

cc Members of the House Appropriations Committee