



# Removing Barriers for Students with Learning Disabilities

**Neurodivergent students, from Kindergarten through college, continue to face barriers due to the lack of proper funding, accommodations, and resources to support their academic success.**

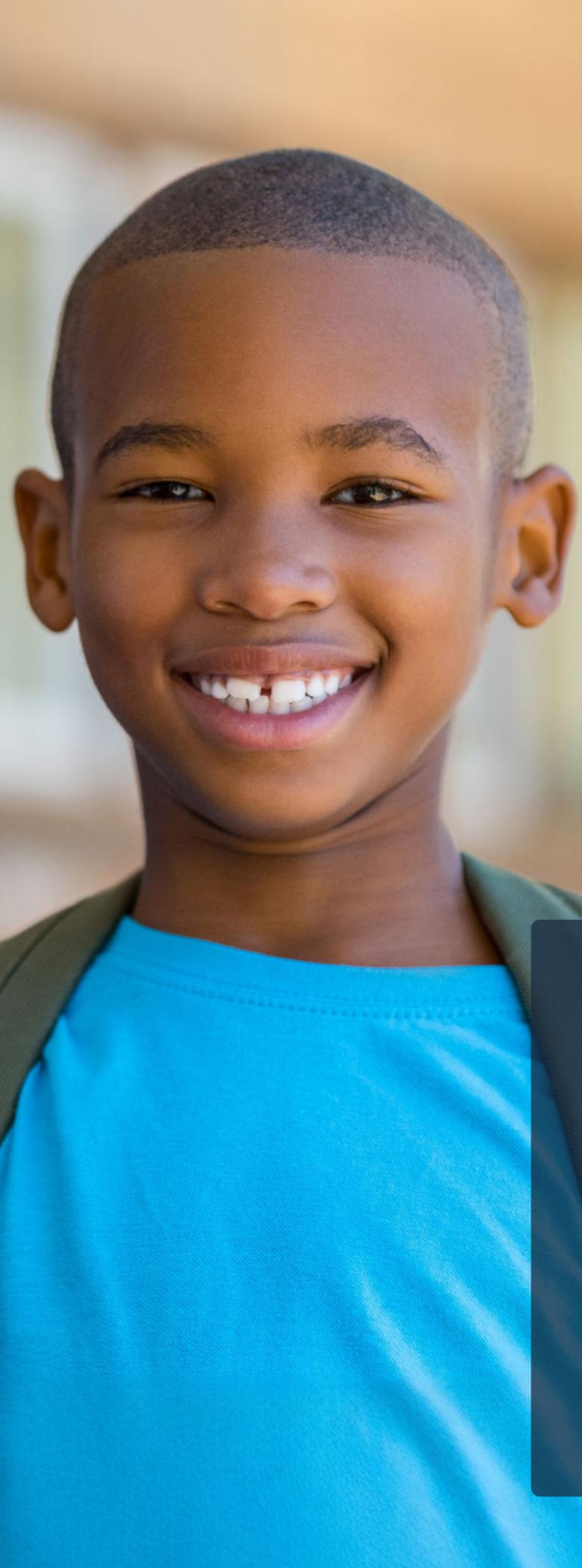
Young adults from the National Center for Learning Disabilities (NCLD) and Eye to Eye National are joining forces to address misconceptions and make waves on Capitol Hill. Our mission? To shatter outdated perceptions and rally policymakers to remove barriers for students with learning disabilities and/or attention issues.

Despite strides forward, students with learning disabilities (LD) still find themselves up against walls. Schools and systems are grappling with insufficient funding, resulting in a scarcity of tailored interventions, accommodations, and essential resources crucial for academic success.

It's time to rewrite the narrative. Today's neurodivergent students aren't held back by ability but by a lack of necessary support, but we can change this with your help.

Students with LD can soar just as high as their peers, with evidence-based services and support systems necessary to unleash their full potential.

## **It's time for change.**



# What is a **Learning Disability?**

A learning disability, or **specific learning disability (SLD)**, is a brain-based disorder that affects an individual's ability to read, write, and do math.

*(e.g., dyslexia, dysgraphia, and dyscalculia)*

## **THE NUMBERS**

**2.41 million students**<sup>1</sup>  
ages 5-21 in the U.S. are identified  
as having a **specific learning disability**.

**21% of undergraduate students**  
have a disability.<sup>2</sup>

**6.1 million children**<sup>3</sup>  
(estimated) ages 2-17 are diagnosed with  
ADHD, or **9.4% of the population**.

An estimated **1/3 of students**<sup>4</sup> with  
learning disabilities also have ADHD.

# Our community has identified five key issues that we urge you to act on:



## 1

## Ensure Access to Higher Education

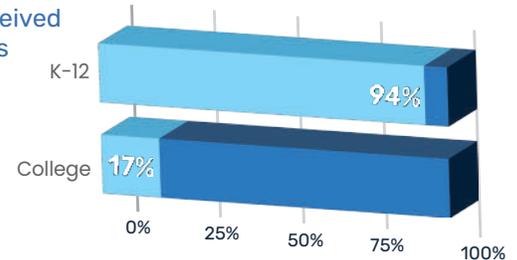
### Respond, Innovate, Succeed, and Empower (RISE) Act (H.R. 2401 & S.1071)

The RISE Act requires colleges and universities to accept an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or 504 plan as proof of a disability when a student seeks accommodations.

#### THE ISSUE

- Many students with disabilities receive accommodations throughout Pre-K –12 education. When transitioning to college, students must navigate new and burdensome requirements to document their disability.

Percentage of Students with LD who Received Accommodations by Academic Setting



Received Accommodations Did Not Receive Accommodations

- 94% of students with LD received accommodations in high school, but only 17% received accommodations in postsecondary education.<sup>5</sup>
- 43% of students with disabilities who didn't receive accommodations in college reported they wished they had.<sup>6</sup>
- The cost of a new evaluation for a student with a learning disability can range from \$500–\$3000.
- The red tape to obtain a new evaluation to re-prove a disability is time-consuming and stigmatizing.
- There is little quality data about students with disabilities in higher education.

#### TAKE ACTION

### The Respond, Innovate, Succeed, and Empower (RISE) Act

The bipartisan bill would require colleges and universities to accept an IEP, 504 Plan, or other pre-existing documentation to establish proof of a disability status. This helps students access the support they need.

The RISE Act also mandates the collection of data about students with disabilities in postsecondary education. It authorizes additional funding for the National Center for Information and Technical Support for Postsecondary Students.

## 2

# Make Schools Safe

### Keeping All Students Safe Act (KASSA)

(H.R. 3470 & S. 1750)

KASSA prohibits the use of seclusion and limits the use of restraint in schools.

### Protecting Our Students in Schools Act (POSSA)

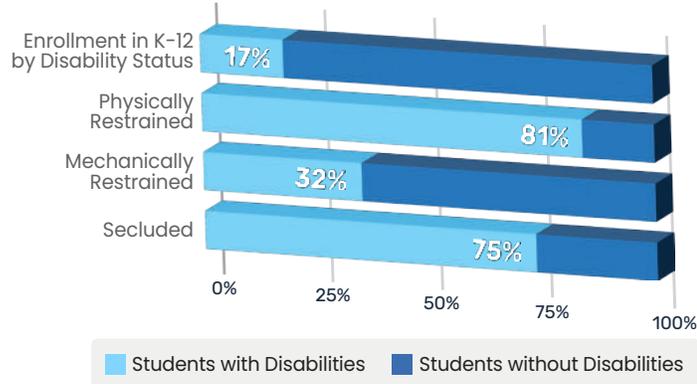
(H.R. 3596 & S.1762)

POSSA prohibits the use of corporal punishment in schools.

#### THE ISSUE

- Restraint, seclusion, and corporal punishment are harmful practices used all too frequently to discipline students in schools.
- 13.2% of students are identified as having a disability but account for 80% of students subjected to physical restraint and 77% of students subjected to seclusion.<sup>7</sup>
- Corporal punishment is still allowed in 19 states and disproportionately harms Black students and students with disabilities.

Percentage of Students Restrained/Secluded by Type and Disability Status<sup>7</sup>



#### TAKE ACTION

### Keeping All Students Safe Act (H.R. 3470 & S. 1750)

This bill prohibits seclusion and limits the use of physical restraint in schools that receive federal funding. It also equips school personnel with the training to address behavior with evidence-based, proactive strategies.

### Protecting Our Students in Schools Act (H.R. 3596 & S. 1762)

This bill prohibits corporal punishment in schools that receive federal funding. It also requires State Education Agencies to submit a school climate report detailing discipline practices. Lastly, POSSA provides grant opportunities to states and districts implementing positive behavioral interventions.

## 3

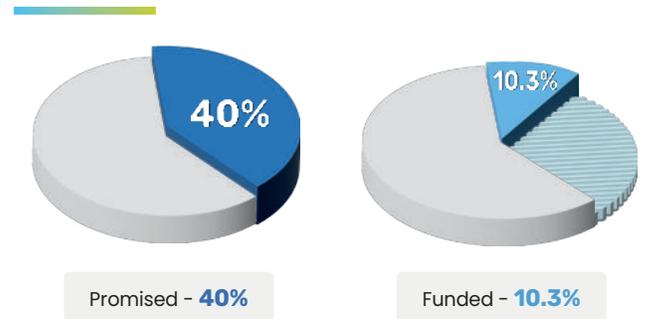
# Keep the Promise

### IDEA Full Funding Act (H.R. 4519 & S. 2217)

This bill provides permanent, mandatory funding for IDEA state grants, ensuring the federal government pays the promised 40 percent of the average per-pupil expenditure for educating students with disabilities.

#### THE ISSUE

- When the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) was first introduced in 1975, Congress promised to fund 40% of the additional cost of educating students with disabilities – a threshold known as “full funding.” However, **that promise has never been met.**



- Congress currently contributes \$14.21 billion to schools, which is only 10.3% of the average per-pupil expenditures. This leaves states and local districts to cover significant portions of the costs associated with special education services.
- Over the last decade, the number of children served by IDEA **has grown by 16%** (serving over 7 million children with disabilities).

#### TAKE ACTION

### IDEA Full Funding Act (H.R. 4519/S. 2217)

- Creates a 10-year glide path to fully fund the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Part B grants to states to support IDEA services.
- Provides permanent, mandatory funding for IDEA grants to states.

## 4

## Increase Opportunities for Students

### Advanced Coursework Equity Act

(H.R. 6328 & S. 3279)

This bill directs the U.S. Department of Education to establish three grant programs to increase enrollment and achievement of underrepresented students in advanced courses (i.e., AP or IB courses).

#### THE ISSUE

- Students with disabilities, students of color, and students impacted by poverty aren't given the same opportunities to participate in Advanced Placement, Gifted and Talented, International Baccalaureate, or dual enrollment courses.
- A survey<sup>8</sup> conducted in 2019 found that only 50% of teachers believe students with learning or attention issues can achieve grade-level standards.
- Taking advanced courses benefits students in the long term, but schools don't have the resources necessary to facilitate equitable access.

#### Students with Disabilities

Served Under IDEA Accounted for <sup>7</sup>

**2%** of students enrolled in **Advanced Placement Courses**

**3%** of students enrolled in **Gifted and Talented Programs**

**4%** of students enrolled in **Dual Enrollment or Dual Credit Programs**

#### TAKE ACTION

### Advanced Coursework Equity Act

(H.R. 6328 & S. 3279)

This bill would allow eligible schools and school districts to:

- Receive up to \$60 million to implement universal screening for advanced students.
- Expand enrollment in advanced courses and train and/or hire teachers for advanced courses.
- Cover course fees for low-income students.
- Prepare students for postsecondary science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) pathways.
- In addition to creating or expanding on related efforts.

## 5

## Strengthen the Teacher Workforce

### EDUCATORS for America Act

(H.R. 2992 & S. 1341)

This bill makes investments in federal programs that support the recruitment, preparation, and retention of educators.

#### THE ISSUE

- There are dire shortages of educators across the country: 48 states and the District of Columbia report teacher shortages in special education.<sup>9</sup>
- A diverse teacher workforce benefits all students, especially students of color. However, almost 80% of teachers are white, compared to 44% of students.<sup>10</sup>
- Access issues drive teacher shortage challenges: not enough people enter teacher preparation programs, and financial barriers impact the preparation, recruitment, and retention of teachers in the field.

#### TAKE ACTION

### EDUCATORS for America Act

(H.R. 2992 & S. 1341)

This bill provides resources to support the preparation, recruitment, and retention of educators, including:

- Expand and invest in the Teacher Quality Partnership program.
- Updates the Augustus F. Hawkins Centers for Excellence to support historically Black colleges or universities (HBCUs) and Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs) in preparing teachers.
- Doubles the maximum amount for Teacher Education Assistance for College And Higher Education (TEACH) grants.
- Reform the Teacher Loan Forgiveness Program by expanding program eligibility and providing incremental credit toward loan forgiveness.



# LD DAY OF ACTION



## ACT NOW!

### Students with learning disabilities need your support!

Whether students are in K-12 or higher education, they deserve better. Congress can make a difference by enacting these critical policies, increasing federal funding, and addressing important research needs. Learn how to support students with learning disabilities by visiting [www.nclld.org](http://www.nclld.org) and [www.eyetoeyenational.org](http://www.eyetoeyenational.org).

### Citations

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[nclld.org/ldaction](http://nclld.org/ldaction)