

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 16, 2010

The Honorable Tom Harkin  
Chairman  
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor,  
Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies  
184 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Thad Cochran  
Ranking Member  
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor,  
Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies  
123 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Harkin and Ranking Member Cochran:

We write to respectfully request a \$5 million increase above the FY2010 budget to address the resource needs of children who are deaf-blind and their teachers and families in FY2011.

The state and national project centers that support the deaf-blind community have not received a budget increase in over 20 years, despite a doubling of the population of children who are deaf-blind over the same period.

In FY2010, the national technical assistance and dissemination program at the Department of Education received \$49.9 million for all disability technical assistance, of which \$12.8 million is designated for deaf-blind program and services. At a time when remarkable advances in medicine and technology are enabling many more of these infants and children to survive and live longer, it is important for Congress to recognize the need for increased support. Because of the continuing budget shortfalls, however, these children are receiving fewer services and programs providing the services increasingly have to operate with fewer well-trained personnel.

The President's budget proposed baseline funding for this program. The modest \$5 million increase for FY2011 is urgently needed to help our states improve services for families and teachers, to support the activities of the national technical assistance and dissemination center of deaf-blindness, and to strengthen personnel preparation programs.

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Thank you in advance for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,