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NDSC Applauds Former Officials Urging Congress to Stop Transfer of Special Education to HHS

The National Down Syndrome Congress (NDSC) commends the former Presidential appointees responsible for implementing the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) under Republican and Democratic administrations for their [letter](#) calling on Congress to immediately stop the transfer of the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) to the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). OSERS includes the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) and the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA). This NDSC [brief](#) explains why breaking up the Department of Education (ED) would harm students with disabilities. The former officials represent a combined total of over 50 years overseeing the implementation of special education.

Stopping the transfer of special education and vocational rehabilitation programs is an urgent matter given a recent ED [announcement](#) of an interagency agreement (IAA) to transfer OSERS to HHS. This IAA is one of 14 that would splinter ED programs among 6 other federal departments. Under the IAAs, states and districts would need to contact 7 federal departments, instead of just one. NDSC opposes all of these interagency agreements that would harm students and cause bureaucratic hurdles for states, districts and schools.

A previous [letter](#) from the former officials called on Congress to reject the Administration proposal to block grant IDEA funding. The Administration had requested Congress to consolidate funding for preschool children with disabilities, the national technical assistance centers, and parent resource centers into a block grant that would go directly to states with no federal oversight -- contrary to current law. Congress rejected that administration proposal on a bipartisan basis.

Stephanie Smith Lee, NDSC Policy & Advocacy Director and former Director of the Office of Special Education Programs, organized the letter signed by former Presidential appointees from both Republican and Democratic administrations. Ms. Lee said, "For more than 50 years, Congress has worked across party lines to strengthen IDEA and improve educational outcomes for students with disabilities. The Administration's effort to dismantle the Department of Education and move special education to HHS puts that progress at risk. This is not simply a bureaucratic reorganization—it will make it harder for states and school districts to navigate the



federal system and will weaken accountability for the education of millions of students with disabilities. Congress should act now to stop these transfers.”

NDSC Executive Director Jim Hudson stated, “Students with Down syndrome and other disabilities rely on a strong federal commitment to ensuring they receive the supports, services, and protections guaranteed under IDEA. Moving special education and rehabilitation programs out of the Department of Education would create unnecessary disruption, weaken accountability, and make it harder for families and schools to access the resources they need. NDSC urges Congress to protect the federal role in special education and reject efforts that would undermine decades of bipartisan progress for people with disabilities.”

About the National Down Syndrome Congress

The National Down Syndrome Congress (NDSC) is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to an improved world for individuals with Down syndrome. Founded in 1973, the NDSC is a leading national resource of support and information for anyone touched by or seeking to learn about Down syndrome, from the moment of a prenatal diagnosis through adulthood. The purpose of the NDSC is to promote the interests of people with Down syndrome and their families through advocacy, public awareness, and information, empowering individuals and families from all demographic backgrounds and reshaping the way people understand and experience Down syndrome. The National Down Syndrome Congress is dedicated to an improved world for individuals with Down syndrome.

For more information on the NDSC, check out our website or follow us on social media.

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