



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**President Obama: Teachers Matter; CEC Could Not Agree More**

*Special educators applaud the president's commitment to education*

**Arlington, Va., Jan. 25, 2012** — The following is a statement from Bruce A. Ramirez, Executive Director, The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) on President Obama's State of the Union Address of Jan. 24, 2012.

“CEC applauds President Obama for making investment in education a priority and his acknowledgement that ‘teachers work tirelessly, with modest pay, sometimes digging into their own pocket for school supplies – just to make a difference.’ That is certainly true of CEC’s 33,000 members, special educators who have devoted themselves to improving the lives of children and youth with disabilities and/or gifts and talents.

“CEC also commends the president on his call to provide ‘the resources to keep good teachers on the job, and reward the best ones.’ But special education has long been challenged by the issue of teacher retention, and, in addition to adequate funding, CEC has always advocated for a full range of supports that teachers need to be successful, including mentoring, induction, professional development, favorable working conditions, and real opportunities to advance.

“CEC supports the idea of increased flexibility for America’s schools, and we agree that it is imperative to provide an environment where educators are encouraged ‘to teach with creativity and passion.’ We must ensure that schools maintain their responsibilities to all students, and that the needs of students with disabilities and/or gifts and talents are not ignored.

“And finally, while CEC applauds the president’s commitment to making college more affordable, we know that financial accessibility means nothing for students with disabilities without true accessibility -- a level playing field and the same opportunities to be admitted to colleges and universities as their peers without disabilities. CEC will continue to work with the administration to ensure that there are a variety of post-secondary options available to all students.

CEC is committed to working with the administration and the Congress on reauthorization of the [Elementary and Secondary Education Act \(ESEA\)](#) and other legislation to raise expectations for all students.

**For more information about CEC, visit [www.cec.sped.org](http://www.cec.sped.org)**

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*CEC is an international community of educators who are the voice and vision of special and gifted education. CEC's mission is to improve the quality of life for individuals with exceptionalities and their families through professional excellence and advocacy.*

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