



For immediate release

Contact: Annie Baldauf, 703-264-9435, annieb@cec.sped.org

Senator Cory Booker Inspires Special Education Advocates Before They Storm Capitol Hill

With a Sense of Urgency Advocates Meet with Members of Congress

Arlington, Va., July 12, 2018 – Over 260 dedicated special education professionals from 46 states volunteered their time to storm Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. and advocate on behalf of children and youth with exceptionalities, and their professional colleagues. At an early morning rally on July 10, Senator Cory Booker praised the advocates for their work, while voicing his concern for what he called a profession in crisis.

“We must do all we can to prepare each and every child for success, and that means supporting and empowering our teachers in the classroom,” **said Senator Booker.** “Teachers across the country are being asked to do more with less—they’re overworked and under-supported at a time when they are going above and beyond for our students. As the greatest, richest country in the world, we can, and should be doing more to prepare and support the people doing some of the most important jobs in our country – our teachers.”

Senator Booker has sponsored the **Supporting the Teaching Profession Through Revitalizing Investments in Valuable Educators (STRIVE) Act**, co-led by U.S. House Representative Donald Norcross (NJ-01). The STRIVE Act includes several key provisions to help address the teacher shortage in the United States, including increased investments in teacher preparation programs and financial assistance to encourage diversity in the teaching profession. Investing in the next generation of teachers is essential in addressing the teacher shortage and is a key issue for the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) and the Council of Administrators of Special Education (CASE).

Co-organizers of the 2018 Special Education Legislative Summit, CEC and CASE, prepared advocates to present to their members of Congress four issues currently challenging the fields of special and gifted education and early intervention. Advocates asked their elected officials to:

- Increase funding for special education and early intervention programs.
- Protect public funds for public education.
- Address the shortage of special education teachers and early intervention providers.
- Provide support to ensure social and emotional learning, positive school climate, and mental health supports.

“As teachers, we are always advocating for our students to ensure they are receiving every support possible to help them succeed in school and in life. Knowing that we have Senator Booker supporting our work gives me a renewed hope that teachers can receive the necessary funding and support to continue to provide a quality education for children and youth,” said Danielle Kovach, CEC Board Member and CEC 2014 Teacher of the Year.

According to CEC President Laurie VanderPloeg, “Our members seized the opportunity to impact positive change for ALL students including children and youth with exceptionalities. New relationships were developed, stories were shared, and recommendations were made concerning our four critical issues.”

The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) is the professional association of educators dedicated to advancing the educational success of children and youth with exceptionalities that accomplishes its mission through advocacy, standards, and professional development. Learn more about CEC at cec.sped.org.

The Council of Administrators of Special Education (CASE) is an international professional educational organization which is affiliated with the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) whose members are dedicated to the enhancement of the worth, dignity, potential, and uniqueness of each individual in society. The mission of CASE is to provide leadership and support to members by shaping policies and practices which impact the quality of education. Learn more about CASE at casecec.org.

###