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NAGC, CEC Applaud Congressional Leaders for Investing in Gifted Education; Urges Congress to Enact FY14 Omnibus Package

Javits Act, unfunded since FY11, identifies, serves gifted, disadvantaged students

WASHINGTON (Jan. 15, 2014) – The National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) and the **Council for Exceptional Children (CEC)**, the nation’s leading advocates for more funding to support gifted students, applauded the actions by key leaders in Congress to restore funding to support a U.S. Department of Education program focused on providing educators with the tools to identify and serve such students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

This week, Senate and House appropriators released a Fiscal Year 2014 spending bill that includes \$5 million for the Jacob Javits Gifted and Talented Students Education Act. The Javits Act, which was defunded by Congress in FY 2011, supports applied research to develop classroom strategies for identifying and serving these learners.

NAGC and CEC have long advocated for a greater investment in the Javits Act. As a longtime supporter of gifted education, NAGC and CEC worked closely with Senate Appropriations Chair Barbara Mikulski (D-Md.), who led the push to restore the funding.

“Our most gifted children need our help just as much as our most vulnerable do. They need to be held to high standards, they need to be challenged, and they need to be engaged. I’m proud to fight to support the Javits Gifted and Talented Education program – our nation’s only federal program dedicated specifically to gifted and talented students,” Sen. Mikulski said.

Over the years, work funded by the Javits program has led to improved instruments for identifying minority and English language learners for gifted education services; models to apply advanced curriculum strategies to a broad range of students; and teacher training approaches to help ensure that general education classroom teachers are able to provide challenging instruction for high-ability students.

“With recent international tests showing that top students in the U.S. are outperformed by peers in numerous nations and a growing paucity of students from disadvantaged and minority backgrounds achieving at advanced levels, the need for this program is abundantly clear,” said NAGC Executive Director Nancy Green.

Despite years of modest funding, the Javits program has enjoyed a strong record of success, helping to develop strategies that teachers have used to recognize high-potential and serve gifted students, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds. Data and research show that students from minority and low-income backgrounds have fewer opportunities to participate in gifted education, despite their ability to thrive in such programming.

“Our federal education policy must emphasize the importance of supporting the academic needs of all students, including those who are gifted,” said CEC President Robin D. Brewer. “We’re delighted to see the FY 2014 omnibus legislation recognizes the national need to invest in supporting gifted learners, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds.”

Green and Brewer also thanked Sen. Mikulski for her leadership and urged Congress to promptly complete its work on the FY 14 omnibus bill and to strengthen and enhance the Javits program in the coming year.

The National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) is an organization of parents, teachers, educators, other professionals, and community leaders who unite to address the unique needs of children and youth with demonstrated gifts and talents as well as those children who may be able to develop their talent potential with appropriate educational experiences. Visit us at www.nagc.org.

The Council for Exceptional Children (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. Visit us at www.cec.sped.org.

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