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November 2, 2017

Subject: Permanently eliminate the sequester-level discretionary caps

Dear Members of Congress:

On behalf of the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), we urge you to permanently eliminate the sequester-level discretionary caps and maintain the long-standing principle of parity by matching any increases in the defense caps with equal increases in the non-defense discretionary (NDD) caps. Congress must eliminate the sequestration caps in order to make critical investments in both defense and NDD programs, including education, which are essential to our nation's security and prosperity.

The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC)—an international association of special educators, administrators, related service personnel, higher education faculty, and researchers—is the voice and vision of special education. Our mission is to advance the success of children with exceptionalities. We accomplish our mission through advocacy, standards, and professional development.

Because the sequester level spending caps are too low, Congress has raised the caps on defense and NDD funding by equal amounts for the last four years. That brings us to fiscal year 2018, when the NDD cap is cut by \$3 billion in nominal terms and by \$16 billion in inflation-adjusted terms. The House lowered that tight level by another \$5 billion in its omnibus funding bill, leading to harmful cuts to education and workforce development programs.

We urge Congress to use the opportunity before the continuing resolution expires on December 8 to eliminate the sequester-level caps. This will allow Congress to make necessary investments in NDD programs, including education and related programs.

Educational attainment is inextricably tied to both individual success and the nation's economic strength. Children and youth and programs are counting on strong federal education investments to ensure equitable access to high quality education and early intervention from early childhood to higher education and career and technical and adult education, and to fill gaps where local and state funding is insufficient or where new needs arise. We encourage Congress to use the time it has this fall to repeal the Budget Control Act sequester-level caps and significantly increase the federal education investment to maximize opportunities for children and youth and their families, schools and programs, and our nation.

Please feel free to contact me at debz@cec.sped.org if you have any questions or need additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Deborah A. Ziegler". The signature is written in black ink on a light-colored background.

Deborah A. Ziegler
Director of Policy and Advocacy