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Congress of the United States
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April 24, 2019

The Honorable Betsy DeVos
Secretary, U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Ave SW
Washington, DC 20002

Dear Secretary DeVos:

I write to express my strong opposition to the Department of Education's recent budget proposal unconscionable cuts that would do nothing except harm children and adults with disabilities. My district is home to thousands of families who have a loved one with a developmental or physical disability. Already many not-for-profits that serve people with disabilities are facing financial hardship under the burden of new state laws while parents are left to become their child's advocate because of a byzantine system that struggles to serve the individual needs of a special needs child. Now your department wants to make it even harder for someone with a disability to live the fulfilling life every single human being deserves.

Among the programs targeted for cuts are those that offer after-school programs for low-income students, programs that provide professional development for teachers, and mental health services. These programs allow children, especially those with special needs, to grow and gain confidence while learning and challenging themselves. But your budget means that the approximately 14 percent of all students who currently receive special education services are facing cuts at a time when they need more help, not less. Furthermore, by prioritizing charter schools instead of helping public schools meet the demand for services, you are not only starving our public schools of needed resources but giving away millions to many schools that studies have shown have no interest in properly serving this community.

Beyond schools, several other programs for people with disabilities are also threatened by your proposal. The Special Olympics, the American Printing House for the Blind, the National Technical Institute for the Deaf, and funding for Arts in Education are all drastically cut. You even urge Congress to cut programs that connect people with disabilities with jobs, a critical resource to gaining independence and contributing to the American workforce. And although overwhelming public pressure caused you to state that you are reversing yourself and you now support funding the Special Olympics, you are still pushing for the rest of these cuts. The media may have moved on, but I will not. I strongly urge you to reverse your proposed cuts to services and programs for children and adults with disabilities.

Sincerely,



Max Rose
Member of Congress