



# SENATOR JOHN ENSIGN

## ISSUE BRIEF

### EDUCATION

#### SENATOR ENSIGN'S SUPPORT FOR THE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) supports special education and other services for children with disabilities. As a member of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, I worked with my colleagues on the recent reauthorization of IDEA. During the reauthorization, we worked to increase accountability and improve education results for children with disabilities, reduce the paperwork burden on teachers and administrators, reduce the overidentification and misidentification of children for these services, and encourage innovative approaches to parental involvement and choice. Additional provisions in this legislation provide for training of special education teachers, promote effective early intervention strategies, and simultaneously restore trust and reduce litigation.

When the federal government enacted IDEA in 1975, it promised to fund 40% of each state's "excess cost" of educating children with disabilities. The federal share of the excess cost is calculated by a formula based on the number of children with disabilities residing in each state. Currently the federal government funds about 19% of the excess costs. I am very supportive of fulfilling the federal government's commitment to fund these excess costs.

In fact, during my time in the Senate I have supported numerous amendments and other pieces of legislation that would fully fund IDEA within the next six years. It is imperative that Congress step up to the plate and fulfill its promise to these very special children and their families. As you can see in the chart below, funding for IDEA has more than doubled in the past five years. Never before has IDEA seen such historic increases, and I will work with my colleagues to continue this good work and keep our promise to help these special children.

#### NV's Share of Special Education Dollars Up Over \$23 Million Since 2000

Fiscal Year	NV's Share of Federal IDEA Funds	NV's Increase Above the Previous Year	Total IDEA Funds Nationwide	IDEA Annual Increase in Total Dollars
2000	\$31,978,892	--	\$5.0 billion	
2001	\$39,753,480	\$7,774,588	\$6.3 billion	\$1.3 billion
2002	\$47,043,750	\$7,290,270	\$7.5 billion	\$1.2 billion
2003	\$55,241,348	\$8,197,598	\$8.5 billion	\$1 billion
2004	\$62,989,474	\$7,748,126	\$10.9 billion	\$2.4 billion
2005	\$66,800,410	\$3,810,936	\$11.4 billion	\$500 million