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Senate: Feds must keep their promise to disabled students

HJM 3: Calls on Congress to fully fund Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

SALEM – About 40 years ago, the federal government made a promise that it would help fund educational programs for disabled students, and the Oregon Senate is calling on Congress to make good on that pledge.

[House Joint Memorial 3](#) – which passed the Senate on a 28-0 vote today – urges Congress to enact the Individuals with Disabilities Education Full Funding Act to fully fund the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. The important federal program helps ensure that children with disabilities all over the country can have access to educational opportunities.

“One of the most important things we can do as a state is provide the best education we can to all of our students, regardless of disabilities,” said Sen. Arnie Roblan (D-Coos Bay), who carried the bill on the Senate floor. “The federal government needs to continue operating with this legislation, but it needs to take the extra step that was promised years ago and fully fund the program.”

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act is a four-part piece of federal legislation that ensures people with a disability are provided with Free Appropriate Education that is tailored to their individual needs. First passed in 1975 as the Education for All Handicapped Children Act, the bill was reauthorized by Congress and renamed to its current title in 1990.

IDEA provides guidance and governs how states provide intervention, public education and related services to eligible students with disabilities. This includes infants, toddlers, children and

youth with disabilities. The full funding act amends IDEA to reauthorize the program and appropriate money for the grant program that assists states in providing special education services to children with disabilities.

“Our work with Oregon families has given us the opportunity to see first-hand the challenges Oregon school districts have in fully meeting the needs of all students experiencing disabilities and in meeting their responsibilities,” wrote FACT Oregon Executive Director Roberta Dunn, as part of her written testimony. “Despite a promise made over 40 years ago when it enacted IDEA, the federal government has never fully funded the ‘40 percent of the average per pupil expenditure’ it promised to states to help offset the cost of educating eligible special education students.”

House Joint Memorial 3 – which calls to fully fund the program – now goes to Oregon Gov. Kate Brown for her signature.

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