

Special
Education
Legislative
Summit **2021**
July 19-20, 2021



Town Hall and Summit Kickoff

Agenda





- **Welcome**
 - Dr. Dennis Cavitt, President, Council for Exceptional Children
 - Erin Maguire, President, Council of Administrators of Special Education
- **Overview: Power of advocacy**
- **How to engage during SELS week**
- **Live Town Hall, Featuring:**
 - Senator Chris Van Hollen (D-MD)
- **Policy/Advocacy Overview: How advocates fit into the policymaking process**
 - Dr. Kevin Rubenstein, CASE Policy Chair
 - Kuna Tavalin, CEC Senior Policy and Advocacy Advisor

Power of Advocacy

- **Advocacy is:**
 - *Organized action in support of an idea or cause; constituents educating elected officials*
- **The power of collective voice: When we come together around a single cause, we amplify it**
- **Can I advocate?**
 - Yes! You do not need to be an expert in policy to advocate, you are already an expert at what you do in this field

Advocacy Gets Results

- CEC/CASE Emergency IDEA Funding Request, March 2020

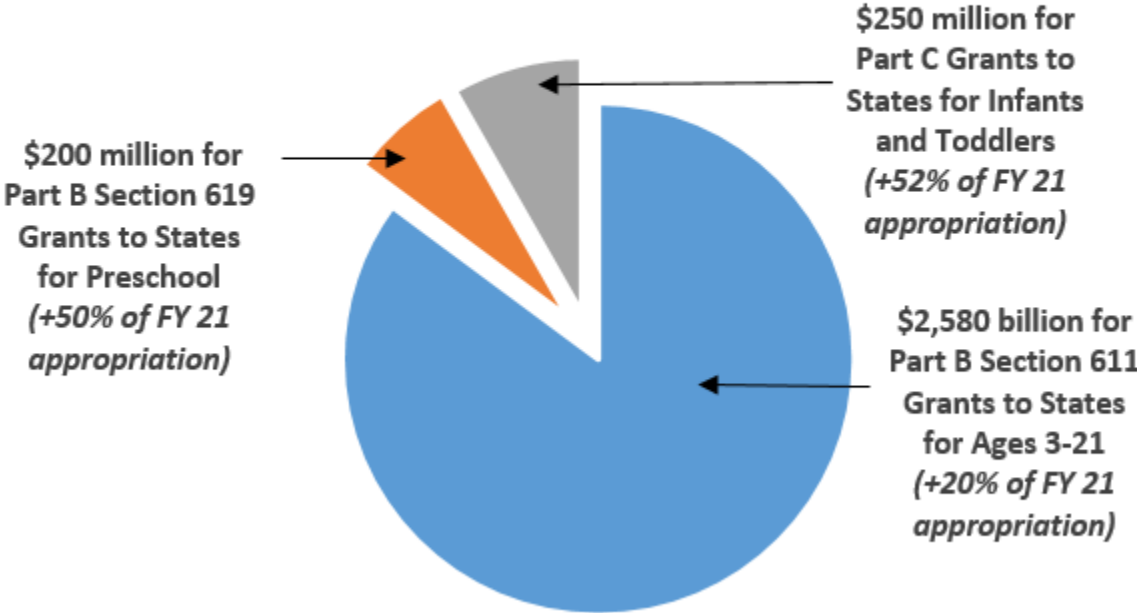
- \$11.3b for IDEA Part B 
- \$500m for IDEA Part C 
- \$400m for Section 619 
- \$300m for IDEA Part D 

- *Supporting Children with Disabilities During COVID-19 Act*, June 2020

- \$11b for IDEA Part B
- \$500m for IDEA Part C
- \$400m for Section 619
- \$300m for IDEA Part D

Result: \$3 billion for IDEA

ARPA Funding for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)



Opportunities during SELS

- During our Legislative Summit, we encourage you, your colleagues, and others to take action on our Legislative Action Centers:
- <https://bit.ly/CASEActs> OR
- <https://exceptionalchildren.org/takeaction>
- Pre-formatted letters, call scripts, tweets which are ready to go for you on our three issues.

Opportunities during SELS

- **For the second year, we have developed a social media toolkit for your use:**
 - Toolkit is designed to help amplify your voice and help drive others to our action centers
 - Allows others, including those on Capitol Hill to learn about, and take action on our issues even though they might not be attending SELS.
- **Really important to use the hashtags **#SELS2021** and **#4SpecialEducation** in your social media so that we can help each other to amplify our messages.**

Welcome/Remarks



**U.S. Senator
Chris Van Hollen
(D-MD)**

Typical Bill Process



Advocates have a voice in every step of the process

Who Will You Meet With?

- Members of Congress
- Staff in personal offices
- Some Members will be on key Committees:
 - Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions
 - House Education and Labor Committee
 - Senate *and* House Appropriations Committee
 - Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Subcommittee

Building an Effective Case

- Illustrate a need
- Build a sense of urgency
- Tell a personal story that connects the issue to your district
- Make the “ask”
- Invite questions to further engage with your delegation

Establish yourself as an expert on a specific topic and becoming a trusted resource

Power of Being a Constituent

- **State/local connection**
 - Members prioritize issues that impact their state/district
- **Personal connection**
 - Member or staff may be familiar with your school district/region, may know you or your colleagues
- **Members will always be respectful**
 - Even if you disagree on policy, your Representatives and their staff will be kind (*with very rare exception)
 - Their job is to serve your interests
 - Staff members and Members of Congress are human beings

Power of Being a Constituent

- **A divided Congress is united around issues that are meaningful to them**
 - Always be authentic, but speak from your heart about why these issues are important to you as an educator.
 - Expect that some legislators and staff will have personal connections with your stories even if you don't expect this.
- **We are only 17 months away from the mid-term elections**
 - Follow up with staff who asked for a tour of your building when they are back at home.
 - Forge relationships as much as possible

July Congressional Agenda

- Bi-partisan infrastructure package
- Partisan American Families Plan
- Appropriations
 - President has set forth his budget request
 - House education spending bill has advanced through Committee

SELS Policy Issues

- Educator shortages
- Student mental health
- Federal funding

Coming Up Next...

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Appropriations Panel: Is it Really All About the Funding?

#SELS2021

