



National Association of State Directors of Special Education, Inc.

225 Reinekers Lane, Suite 420, Alexandria, VA 22314

Tel: 703/519-3800 Fax: 703/519-3808 www.nasdse.org

January 9, 2017

The Honorable Chuck Grassley
Chairman
Senate Judiciary Committee
224 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein
Ranking Member
Senate Judiciary Committee
224 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Grassley and Ranking Member Feinstein:

The National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE) writes to express concerns with the nomination of Senator Jefferson Sessions (R-AL) to be the next Attorney General of the United States.

NASDSE is the national nonprofit organization that represents the state directors of special education, the IDEA Part B data managers and the IDEA 619 coordinators in the states, the District of Columbia, the federal territories, the Freely Associated States and the Department of Defense Education Agency.

Our concerns stem from his record regarding students with disabilities. He has called the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act's requirements to include children with disabilities in mainstream education "the single most irritating problem for teachers throughout America today" and "a big factor in accelerating the decline in the civility and discipline in classrooms all over America."¹ This opposition to integration and inclusion is problematic given the active role that the Justice Department plays in enforcing the Americans with Disabilities Act to enable people with disabilities to live independent lives, be full participants in their communities, and to be educated in their neighborhood schools and general education classrooms.

These issues must be fully deliberated before each Senator makes a final decision with respect to his nomination.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments. Please feel free to contact NASDSE's Director of Government Relations, Nancy Reder at nancy.reder@nasdse.org if you have any questions about our comments.

Sincerely,

Theron (Bill) East, Jr., Ed.D.
Executive Director

¹ Floor Statement, Education Discipline and IDEA (May 18, 2000), available at <http://www.sessions.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/2000/5/education-discipline-and-idea->