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SENATE JOINT MEMORIAL 8018

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State of Washington                      58th Legislature                      2003 Regular Session

By Senators McAuliffe, Rasmussen, Fairley, Shin, Eide, Doumit, Kline  
and B. Sheldon

Read first time 02/20/2003. Referred to Committee on Education.

1            TO THE HONORABLE GEORGE W. BUSH, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES,  
2            AND TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE AND THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF  
3            REPRESENTATIVES, AND TO THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE  
4            UNITED STATES, IN CONGRESS ASSEMBLED, AND TO THE HONORABLE TERRY  
5            BERGESON, SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION:

6            We, your Memorialists, the Senate and House of Representatives of  
7            the State of Washington, in legislative session assembled, respectfully  
8            represent and petition as follows:

9            WHEREAS, We are a nation committed to ensuring that every boy and  
10            girl in America is learning - regardless of disability status; and

11            WHEREAS, No child should be left behind in our schools and children  
12            with disabilities remain one of the most at risk of being left behind;  
13            and

14            WHEREAS, The supply of special education teachers is not meeting  
15            the demand and almost two-thirds of Washington special education  
16            teachers report that they will be out of the field in five years due to  
17            unpaid work, case overload, paperwork, lack of adequate training, and  
18            personal safety reasons; and

19            WHEREAS, Many educators, particularly those who teach special

1 education classes, find that the amount of required paperwork  
2 dramatically reduces both the quantity and quality of time they can  
3 devote to their students and their profession; and

4 WHEREAS, In a survey of four thousand current and former certified  
5 special educators in Washington, more than half of the respondents say  
6 they work from five to twelve unpaid hours per week and around seventy  
7 percent report that their jobs are harder now than they were three  
8 years ago; and

9 WHEREAS, We believe that the Individuals with Disabilities Act  
10 (IDEA) continues to be underfunded and that the current version of the  
11 IDEA creates unnecessary regulatory burdens that hamper the abilities  
12 of special education teachers to do their jobs; and

13 WHEREAS, In August of 2000, the Office of the Washington State  
14 Superintendent of Public Instruction revised a set of model forms for  
15 services to students in special education to help with the paperwork  
16 overload; and

17 WHEREAS, We believe that a set of model forms at the federal level  
18 would help give additional guidance on how to limit the amount of  
19 required paperwork to that which is appropriate and necessary to help  
20 children achieve their educational goals without diminishing the level  
21 or quality of education provided to the student; and

22 WHEREAS, We cannot fix the growing problem alone given the role of  
23 the federal government;

24 NOW, THEREFORE, Your Memorialists respectfully pray that Congress  
25 pass and the President approve legislation that would require a review  
26 of special education paperwork and consider providing a set of model  
27 forms at the federal level to help to determine the most appropriate  
28 amount and the most appropriate type of paperwork that will help  
29 students receiving special education to achieve their educational goals  
30 without diminishing the level or quality of education provided to the  
31 student and that will continue to protect the rights of parents and  
32 students guaranteed under the IDEA; and

33 Your Memorialists further respectfully pray that Congress provide  
34 adequate funding for the IDEA and pursue reform of the IDEA that will  
35 streamline the procedural requirements, encourage flexibility,  
36 innovation, and choices at all levels of special education and address  
37 the flight of special education teachers from the field.

1       BE IT RESOLVED, That copies of this Memorial be immediately  
2 transmitted to the Honorable George W. Bush, President of the United  
3 States, the Honorable Terry Bergeson, Superintendent of Public  
4 Instruction, the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of  
5 the House of Representatives, and each member of Congress from the  
6 State of Washington.

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