

To Whom It May Concern:

National debt is staggering, world war seems imminent, and we're still stuck in a recession that doesn't seem to end. In these trying times, it seems like it would be a good idea to cut back on spending and regulations. It's understandable—up to a certain point. Some short-term sacrifices are necessary; however, the government should not make sacrifices that will cut into investments in our country's future. By removing protections for students with ADHD, the government is undermining America's greatest investment of all—our children.

Who can negotiate a treaty leading to decades of world peace? Who can invent a vaccine that will save thousands of lives? Who can alleviate the racial divide in this country by making art and music that changes people's attitudes toward social justice? One of our nation's children might be able to—but they may never reach that point if they are denied the resources they need to reach their full potential.

Children with ADHD are just as intelligent as children without the condition. Some are even highly gifted. The Centers for Disease Control estimates that approximately 11% of children have ever been diagnosed with ADHD. By refusing to give support to the thousands of children in this country who meet the criteria for it, the government is allowing society to miss out on what over one in ten children has to offer, some of whom may even be geniuses. Due to their difficulties with attention and organization, students with ADHD do not receive grades reflective of their intelligence or even effort unless they receive accommodations such as the ones outlined in the "Dear Colleague" letter. Also, unless schools provide ADHD testing—another beneficial

measure that may disappear unless the “Dear Colleague” letter is upheld—students may be unaware that they even have the condition until their teenage years or young adulthood, by which time it may be too late to get on the right track academically. Teachers are very often the first to notice ADHD symptoms.

Some people might argue that even if these children were given accommodations in school, they would still not be able to achieve as much as a child without the condition. “There are no accommodations in the real world!” they cry. This is false. Accommodations are also available in college and usually even the workplace; however, in order to get into the college at the correct level of difficulty for them, and secure the most challenging job possible, students must first be given the opportunity to prove their true intelligence at the lower levels of education. There is no way for them to do this unless they are diagnosed early and given accommodations accordingly.

My sincere hope is that Congress will continue to invest in our country’s future. It would be a sad day for America if we resolved to allow 11% of our children to waste their potential.

Sincerely,

A concerned American