

Dear Secretary DeVos,

I believe all children deserve to feel safe and welcomed in their classrooms and receive a high-quality education in the United States of America. We set the standard for the world. When a school or a school district violates any students' civil rights, including my son Aedan seen in the attached photo, our federal laws require the U.S.

Department of Education to protect students like my son.

In order to make sure that the states, districts and schools understand what the law requires of them, and to make sure that everyone understands the protections students have, IDEA regulations and guidance have been developed to clarify the laws. I oppose any effort to

rescind, modify or replace these regulations and guidance that clarify our civil rights and education laws. My son is a great model student. He deserves the rights to opportunity like any US citizen. This young man is a good student who wants to learn, goes to school with enthusiasm and self-confidence despite his disability and challenges. Don't turn the US into a caste system! We are more enlightened than that. This is the USA we create opportunity not put up intentional obstacles for the people. My son has an extra copy of the 21st chromosome, this is not reason for segregating him. We are the United States of America, we better start acting like it, this proposal to roll back IDEA is so third world, that you should feel shame for even considering it. My son's Down Syndrome does not define

him, though I recognize that his educational needs are different from a neurotypical student. Play to my son's strengths and the other deficits will fill in, provided that there are supports and laws to protect his rights to achieve, and he is as competitive as they come. My son is equipped for greatness because we use IDEA at our IEP meeting to assure he gets the best teachers and the adequate curriculum to give him the tools to go to Harvard, NYU, anywhere he wants to. Imagine greatness, and don't derail the hard work he has put into school, and the hard work we have put in as parents, and the preceding generations that worked to make this country fair and just for people with Down Syndrome. My son is his own best advocate, at age 9. I implore you to give him the

opportunity to compete, to contribute, to be a great citizen, who loves his country, his God, and his family. Those are our values reflected in him. We have several generations of military in my family, including my dad who was a US Marine. Live by the ethical code that protects our students, students like my son Aedan who happens to have been born with Down Syndrome. Enable his full potential by protecting his rights. It couldn't be more clear. Look at my boy's photo, see how proud he is. Who wouldn't want to give this young man every opportunity? I know who, you.

Best, Anthony Jay Ptak, proud parent of Aedan, a student born with a disability. I love my son, I love my wife and family. I recognize my son works twice as hard to achieve because of his disability. I love my country. I respect God's

Law and so should the United States of America. Don't tread on me! Don't alter IDEA, enforce it, for a change. Send in the Marines to protect our schools from Betsy DeVos. Let's fix this, strengthen these laws don't weaken the foundation of our republic. This is an opportunity to reinforce IDEA, like none other. Choose to be a patriot, else you'll plunge us into the 3rd world, we are better than that, or at least I am, and my son has those core values. God, family, country in that order and to great effect.

Anthony Ptak

