

Rep. Hooker offered the following resolution:

House Resolution No. 161.

A resolution to memorialize the United States Congress to fully fund the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and provide the full amount authorized for special education funding to the state of Michigan.

Whereas, Americans recognize that we have a moral and legal obligation to provide equal educational opportunities to all of our children, regardless of their disability status. The United States Congress in 1975 enacted the Education for All Handicapped Children Act in order to help states cope with the financial burdens of providing special education services so that all children may participate fully in public education; and

Whereas, The current law, renamed in 1990 as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), renewed our national commitment to the ideal of universal public school education for our children regardless of disabilities. However, the federal government has never fulfilled its original promise of providing states with 40 percent of the additional costs of providing special education services. Indeed, the federal government has settled for a goal of providing 17 percent of the state funding needs. Even recent stimulus spending additions have not increased this funding percentage to more than about 18 percent, well under half of the original promise; and

Whereas, In these dire financial times, when our state is struggling to maintain critical services without burdensome additions to our tax system, it is vital that the federal government finally honor its promise to fund 40 percent of state special education programs. We have made great strides in the area of equal opportunity for students with disabilities, but our achievements are threatened. A commitment by Congress to provide 40 percent of special education funding would be a welcome, if belated, contribution to coping with the deep recession that has ravaged Michigan's financial health; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives, That we memorialize the United States Congress to fully fund the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and provide the full amount authorized for special education funding to the state of Michigan; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, and the members of the Michigan congressional delegation.