

Administration of Barack H. Obama, 2010

Statement on the 35th Anniversary of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

November 29, 2010

In America, we believe that every child, regardless of class, color, creed, or ability, deserves access to a world-class education. But as recently as 35 years ago, an American child with a disability might have attended school without the interventions and accommodations necessary for their success or been involuntarily isolated in a State-run institution or even received no education at all.

That was wrong, and America set out to right it. Today, across the United States, nearly 6.6 million students with disabilities rely on the provisions of the landmark Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) to ensure that they enjoy the same educational rights as all children.

And as we mark the 35th anniversary of that law, we remember what it was all about: equal opportunity, equal access; not dependence, but independence. We know that our education system must hold children with disabilities to the same high standards as those without disabilities and hold them accountable for their success and their growth. We remember that disability rights are civil rights too and pledge to enforce those rights in order to live up to our founding principles and ensure the promise of opportunity for all our people. And even as we celebrate children with disabilities and their parents, teachers, advocates, and all who still strive to tear down the true barriers to success, even as we celebrate how far we've come, we commit ourselves to the ever-unfinished work of forming that more perfect Union.

Categories: Statements by the President : Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 35th anniversary.

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