



## COALITION ON HUMAN NEEDS

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February 7, 2017

Dear Senator:

The Coalition on Human Needs joins with many other organizations in urging you to vote against the confirmation of Betsy DeVos for Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education.

The Coalition on Human Needs is an [alliance](#) of more than 100 national organizations, including human service providers, faith-based groups, policy experts, civil rights groups and other advocates who come together to meet the needs of low-income and vulnerable people. With regard to Ms. DeVos, we have joined groups advocating for children with disabilities in grave concern over her lack of knowledge of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and her unwillingness to commit to vigorous protection of the rights of students with disabilities to a free and appropriate education. As noted in a letter from the [Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities](#), “When asked on whether all schools that receive federal funding should meet equal accountability standards, Mrs. DeVos answered, “Well no.” “When asked whether all schools that receive taxpayer funding should meet the requirements of IDEA, Mrs. DeVos responded, “I think that is a matter best left up to the states.”

Ms. DeVos’ commitment to school vouchers would leave large numbers of low-income students unable to afford a private education and less able to receive a quality public education because of the diversion of funds away from support of public schools. Rural communities depend on public schools, and would be harmed by diversion of resources away from their support.

We believe Ms. DeVos would direct resources away from low-income students and students with disabilities, with disproportionate ill effects on minority children and youth. We urge you to vote against her confirmation.

Sincerely yours,

Deborah Weinstein  
Executive Director