



## CEC Pennsylvania Voter Guide

Providing non-partisan information to Pennsylvania-CEC Members

1. If elected, how will you use your position in Congress to financially support states and localities in educating students with disabilities under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)?

**Bob Casey (Democrat):** No response as of press time

**Rick Santorum (Republican):** "I am proud to be an advocate for students with disabilities. I am a longtime supporter of IDEA, which provides tools for parents, teachers and schools to provide the highest quality education for students with disabilities. There are nearly 7 million youth in the country with disabilities, and IDEA is critical to ensuring that all children receive the quality education they deserve. In the absence of the full federal funding promised, communities have had to supplement funding to ensure that students with disabilities receive a high quality education. I will continue to fight to ensure that the federal government does a better job of fulfilling the important promise of sufficient IDEA funding for America's students with disabilities."

**Carl Romanelli (Green):** No response as of press time

2. What measures would you recommend to address the national shortage of special educators?

**Bob Casey (Democrat):** No response as of press time

**Rick Santorum (Republican):** "We need to encourage talented and well-qualified individuals to enter the teaching profession, including special education. Earlier this year, I supported the Deficit Reduction Act, which provides for additional loan forgiveness for special education teachers. I continue to closely monitor developments related to the IDEA teacher paperwork reduction demonstration projects, which I secured in the last IDEA reauthorization. I am hopeful that these demonstration projects will yield an effective policy that can be widely adopted. Excess paperwork places a significant burden on special educators and schools, and can deter individuals from pursuing careers in special education, or lead individuals currently in the classroom to leave the profession. Both of these scenarios further exacerbate the current national workforce shortage. Teachers working with students with disabilities should be free to focus on their most important priority—the education of our children. Great demands are placed on special educators, and we must do a better job of providing sufficient IDEA

funding at the federal level to support them and those individuals that are considering entering the profession.”

**Carl Romanelli (Green):** No response as of press time

3. How would you support the education of students with gifts and talents at the Federal level?

**Bob Casey (Democrat):** No response as of press time

**Rick Santorum (Republican):** “I have supported the Jacob K. Javits Gifted and Talented Students Education Program, which is the only program at the federal level that focuses on meeting the special education needs of gifted and talented students. Last year, I supported restoring funding to this program, which the President had proposed to eliminate. This year, I supported increasing the appropriations for health and education programs by \$7 billion in 2007 to help ensure that valued programs, like the Javits program, would receive funding. It is important to support students as they pursue more challenging coursework. My Securing Excellence in Education for Our Kids in Math and Science Act would expand access to AP math and science coursework through dual enrollment and distance learning, helping to ensure that students who are ready to take such rigorous coursework have an opportunity to.”

**Carl Romanelli (Green):** No response as of press time

4. How would you address the needs of children with disabilities and/or gifts and talents in the upcoming reauthorization of the No Child Left Behind Act?

**Bob Casey (Democrat):** No response as of press time

**Rick Santorum (Republican):** “I am looking forward to the reauthorization of the No Child Left Behind Act. I am interested in exploring reasonable improvements to this legislation that remain true to goal of ensuring that our nation’s students are proficient in reading and math by 2014. In meetings with hundreds of constituents since the passage of NCLB, I have heard many good suggestions for improvements to the law. I look forward to working with CEC and other interest groups on how best to improve federal education policy. Since enacted, NCLB has been instrumental in identifying failing schools and helping every child – regardless of background – achieve. While students with disabilities should be expected to meet standards, special consideration for their unique needs and the needs of their teachers must be taken into strong consideration – when Congress reauthorizes NCLB, I will be an advocate for this type of flexibility for special education students. Because of IDEA and NCLB, many students are learning and achieving at levels previously thought impossible, graduating from high school and college and entering the workforce. It is our duty to encourage this progress and continue to give parents and teachers the resources they need to create opportunities for all

children.”

**Carl Romanelli (Green):** No response as of press time

5. Please explain your view on providing Medicaid reimbursements to schools for medically necessary transportation and administrative costs for Medicaid-eligible students with disabilities.

**Bob Casey (Democrat):** No response as of press time

**Rick Santorum (Republican):** No response provided

**Carl Romanelli (Green):** No response as of press time