

League of Special Education Voters of the United States, Inc.

Summary of the 2004 Presidential Candidates Positions on I.D.E.A.

(Individuals with Disabilities Education Act)

As of January 21, 2004

The League of Special Education Voters has contacted the various Presidential candidates regarding IDEA reauthorization. The responsiveness of the campaigns has varied widely. As a general rule, the more responsive the candidate, the more important a role IDEA is playing in his/her strategy.

We looked, wherever possible, to voting records and past actions on special education issues. We did not view a desire for "full funding" as a positive unless it was coupled with other substantive ideas. Full funding, in and of itself, is not an answer; special education spending has increased over the past few decades, yet outcomes have not improved enough. There is little reason for us to believe that the answer to our concerns is to simply throw money at the problem. We need a President who will invest in a new paradigm of true accountability, coupled with true enforcement, and who will encourage new strategies to reach students with diverse educational needs.

So far we have not found our hero. We have listed the candidates below in a rough order of preference. Please pass this along to your favorite candidate and ask him/her to step up to the plate. We are prepared to update this 'report card' as needed to reflect the candidates' refining of their positions. See www.SpEdVoters.org for additional information.

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2004 Presidential Candidates on Special Education

Candidate	Pros	Cons	Summary/Campaign Website
Kerry, John	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IDEA enforcement • Strong procedural safeguards for parents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did not say how he will vote on S1248 • No other information on IDEA available 	<p>Has said more about IDEA in this campaign than any other candidate, including a position paper on his website:</p> <p>http://www.johnkerry.com/issues/awd/education.html</p>
Kucinich, Dennis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voted no on HR1350 • Favors short term objectives • Opposes HR1350 discipline and due process 		<p>Voting record shows him to be a strong defender of our children. His website discusses disability rights:</p> <p>http://www.kucinich.us/issues/disability_rights.php</p>
Clark, Wesley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working on various educational policies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No voting record • Minimal details on related issues 	<p>Short on details</p> <p>http://clark04.com/issues/schoolequity</p>
Lieberman, Joseph		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little information on IDEA available 	<p>Only mention of IDEA is at</p> <p>http://www.joe2004.com/site/News2?page=NewsArticle&id=6042</p>
Dean, Howard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopted the Coelho platform (but does not mention educational aspects) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vermont not known for innovative and effective special education programs 	<p>No reason to think he will be progressive on IDEA.</p> <p>http://www3.deanforamerica.com/site/News2?page=NewsArticle&id=10626&JServSessionIdr007=yrcfqlku81.app195a&news_iv_ctrl=1424</p>
Edwards, John	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opposed to attorney fee caps 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voted to bring S1248 out of committee • No other information on IDEA available 	<p>Had a chance to strengthen IDEA in Committee, but did not step up to the plate.</p> <p>No IDEA info on campaign website.</p>
Sharpton, Al	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports Constitutional Amendment guaranteeing every American an education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No voting record • No other information on IDEA available 	<p>Nothing explicit on IDEA at campaign website:</p> <p>http://www.sharpton2004.org/</p>

2003 Voting Record

		This column reflects our opinion as to the bill's effect on children ("-" hurt, "neutral," "+" help)	Kucinich, Dennis
Bill	Abstract		
H.R.438	Increase loan forgiveness for special education teachers.	+	YEA
H.R.490	Improve access to printed instructional materials used by students visually impaired.	+	COS
H.R.1094	Full funding part B.		COS
H.R.1170	Protect children and their parents from being coerced into administering a controlled substance in order to attend school.	+	YEA
H.R.1350	IDEA Reauthorization.	-	NAY
H.R.1502	Use IDEA funds for other purposes.	-	COS
H.R.1576	Outcome-based funding increases to States.	+	COS
H.R.1751	Increase loan forgiveness for special education teachers.	+	COS
H.R.2107	Full funding part B.		COS
H.R.2210	To reauthorize the Head Start Act.	-	NAY
H.R.3007	Early childhood care, coordinate with part C of IDEA.	+	SPO

		("-" hurt, "neutral," "+" help)	Edwards, John	Kerry, John	Lieberman, Joseph
Bill	Abstract				
S.939	Full funding part B.	-/+		COS	COS
S.1248	IDEA Reauthorization.	-	YEA*		
S.ADMT.71	Additional funding part B.	-/+	COS	COS	
S.ADMT.376	Modified full funding part B.	-/+	YEA	YEA	YEA
S.AMDT.377	Additional funding part B.	-/+	YEA	YEA	YEA
S.AMDT.1554	Additional funding part B.	-/+	YEA	No Vote	No Vote
S.AMDT.1572	Additional funding part B.	-/+		COS	

Legend

YEA - voted for

YEA* - voted for in HELP committee

NAY - voted against

SPO - sponsored bill or amendment

COS - co-sponsored bill or amendment

Note: bills that address only full funding are considered neutral.