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SCHAKOWSKY: CONGRESS FAILS TO LIVE UP TO ITS PROMISE TO NATION'S SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS

WASHINGTON, D.C. - U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) today said that Congress must live up to its promise to the nation's special education students and their parents and provide schools with the necessary tools and resources to ensure the best possible education to students with disabilities.

Schakowsky warned, however, that Congress is instead undermining the nation's special education system by passing H.R. 1350, legislation to reauthorize the landmark Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). H.R. 1350:

- allows students to be moved indefinitely to "alternative placements" for any violation of a school code of conduct. These "violations" could include chewing gum in class, shouting out in class, or not completing homework.
- removes the requirement that school-districts determine if a child's disability is the cause of a specific behavior, taking responsibility away from local officials who may be the best judges in these types of cases.
- fails to guarantee any funds for IDEA. The bill provides for an authorization of discretionary funding for IDEA, but does not mandate funding for it.
- places yearly caps on the amount of funding that can be provided for IDEA.

"It makes it easier to kick children with disabilities out of the classroom, even when they are trying to comply, when they are doing their best," Schakowsky said.

Reading letters on the House floor from parents of children with autism and other learning and developmental disabilities who support IDEA, Schakowsky concluded, "If it ain't broke don't fix it."