

6/12/09

Prader-Willi Syndrome Association (USA)

Sign-On and Support the IDEA Fairness Restoration Act (HR 2740)! Few Parents Can Afford to Pay Experts On Their Own.

A message passed on from COPAA (Council of Parent Attorneys & Advocates, Inc.)

Dear Families and Friends,

Please read this important message below from COPAA and consider taking a few moments to sign on. I have already signed on PWSA (USA) as an organization supporter. Following is more information and instructions. This is another way we can support each other. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Evan Farrar
Acting Executive Director
PWSA (USA)

The IDEA Fairness Restoration Act (H.R. 2740) is a Congressional bill that will allow parents who prevail in IDEA due process hearings and litigation to recover the cost of expert witnesses. Few parents can afford the high cost of paying technical, medical, and other expert witnesses themselves; by contrast, school districts can use taxpayer dollar to pay for experts or use staff on their payroll. In 2006, the Supreme Court decided that parents could not be reimbursed for expert witness fees in *Arlington Central School District v. Murphy*; the IDEA Fairness Restoration Act would overturn that decision.

ORGANIZATIONAL SIGN-ON LETTER: Instructions

COPAA is seeking organizational sign-ons to a letter in support of the IDEA Fairness Restoration Act. Last year, we had over 100 organizations from around the country join us in signing on. The organizations do not have to be formal, incorporated organizations; they can be associations, parent support groups, networks of those who advocate for childrens' rights, networks of other professionals, and any other interested and supportive groups. Click here to sign an organization or group on:

[Experts-Org](http://www.experts-org.com). Or cut and paste the following into your web browser
http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=ZqaHLUdhQlhctyl6F_2bSZEa_3d_3d

This link goes to the Sign-On letter so you can read it, and a very simple form to use to sign on your organization. The form allows us to download sign-ons in excel format and to sort them, and it is therefore important to use the form.

PETITION FOR INDIVIDUALS TO SIGN (if you're not an organization/group)

We have a separate petition for individuals to sign supporting the IDEA Fairness Restoration Act. The support of individual parents, attorneys, advocates, professionals, and family members, friends, neighbors, and colleagues is incredibly important. It will take all of us working together to pass this bill

and protect the rights of children with disabilities. Everyone in America knows someone with a disability and a child who could be affected by this issue. Click here to sign the [Indiv-Petition](#) or cut and paste the full link into your web browser:

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=lb9OdiMVf9ZE2rcPz5F2DA_3d_3d

The effects of not being able to afford expert fees can be pernicious. In one case, a mother was forced to go to due process to implement the Independent Educational Evaluation recommendations for her child with severe dyslexia and a written expression disorder. She had to borrow \$1,400 to pay the evaluator to testify, and for 2 days of cross-examination by the school district. The hearing officer ordered the scientifically-based reading instruction the child desperately needed. Before the Supreme Court's Murphy decision, the mother could recover her expert fees; after Murphy, she would not. In other cases, solo practitioners report that they could not take cases pro bono because they had no way to afford the expert. The IDEA Fairness Restoration Act would go far to cure these problems.

More information. You can read more about this important issue on COPAA's website at <http://www.copaa.org/pdf/MurphyBrochure.pdf>

A copy of the bill will be posted to COPAA's website shortly. In the meantime, you can find the full bill at www.congress.gov, and in the box that says Search Bill Summary and Status, type IDEA Fairness and press search. This will take you to H.R. 2740.

For more information, or if you have questions, please feel free to email us at protectidea@copaa.org

Thanks very much,

Robert Berlow and Jess Butler
Co-Chairs, Government Relations
Council of Parent Attorneys & Advocates, Inc.
a national voice for special education rights and advocacy
www.copaa.org
email: protectidea@copaa.org

Monthly Donation Opportunity Now Available

Can you make a regular monthly donation? Automatic monthly, quarterly, or annual donations can now be set up through the "Donate Now" tab on our website at www.pwsausa.org. Please consider this new giving opportunity - every little bit helps! Be one of the first to sign up for automatic monthly donations.

Sign Up to Get The Gathered View Electronically

To receive The Gathered View newsletter by email, sign up at www.pwsausa.org/emailGV.htm. Be the first to get the news, without waiting for snailmail!

Thank you for your consistent support. Remember, you can always make an online donation at www.pwsausa.org/support/donateform.asp. Together, there is nothing we cannot achieve for our children.

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