

What does the RISE Act do?

The RISE Act amends the Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA) to ensure that students with disabilities thrive in college. It focuses on three critical issues:

- 1 Information** > provides parents and students with information on disability services in one place, making it easier to know what services are available in higher education and how to access them.
- 2 Accommodations** > requires colleges to accept an IEP or 504 plan as evidence of disability when a student is seeking accommodations in college.
- 3 Training** > supports a technical assistance center for college faculty to learn more about the needs of students with disabilities.

The RISE Act was introduced by Senator Casey (D-PA), Senator Hatch (R-UT), and Senator Cassidy (R-LA) in December 2016.

Why Is the RISE Act Important to Students and Families?

Problem #1: Students with disabilities often face challenges as they navigate the higher education system and must meet new – sometimes costly – requirements to access accommodations.

Many students with disabilities received accommodations throughout their elementary and secondary education, but when they transition to college they must navigate new requirements to document their disability and often receive different types of support.

In fact:

- 94% of students with LD received accommodations in high school.²
- But only 17% received accommodations in post-secondary education.³
- And 43% who didn't receive accommodations in post-secondary reported that they wished they had.⁴

To access accommodations, many colleges have required students to provide specific documentation that has resulted in some students having to pay out of pocket for a new evaluation, which is often expensive and not fully covered by insurance.

The RISE Act will streamline the process to qualify for disability services and require colleges to accept a variety of forms of documentation of a disability, including an IEP, 504 Plan, notice from doctor, or evaluation by a psychologist.

50% of parents of high school students and

60% of parents of recent graduates

think the process to get accommodations and support services, including necessary documentation, is **difficult and unclear**.¹

The cost to have my son reevaluated for a more current diagnosis was too expensive, so he was not able to get services. It is very likely he will have to move home and go to a community college for the Fall 2016 semester. He feels like a failure because of this.

-Parent, North Carolina

PROBLEM #2: It can be hard to find information about disability services programs in college.

For many prospective college students with disabilities, the availability and quality of disability services and supports offered by a college can be a significant factor in deciding where to enroll. But this information is hard to find and often requires students and families to reach out to schools individually to find the information they need. For example, according to an analysis by NCLD, only 6 out of 400 colleges provided any information about disability services on the U.S. Department of Education's public website, College Navigator.

The RISE Act will authorize \$10 million for the National Center for Information and Technical Support for Post-Secondary Students with Disabilities, a resource center that will provide clear information about disability services offered by colleges and the supports available.

Problem #3: Too often, college faculty do not receive training and support to address the needs of students with disabilities.

More students with disabilities are enrolling in college than ever before, but just 45 percent of students with learning disabilities completed a 4-year degree compared to 53 percent of students without disabilities.⁶

To help students succeed in college, it's important for their professors to have the training and support to understand the different types of disabilities, accommodations and effective teaching strategies.

Through the \$10 million the RISE Act authorizes for the National Center for Information and Technical Support for Post-Secondary Students with Disabilities, the Center will support professional development about disability for college faculty and serve as a clearinghouse for disability services information for students and families.

72% of parents of high school students think it is difficult to find information about disability services in college.⁵

In our college search, I feel like we dig and dig and come up with not a lot for our effort.

-Parent, Wisconsin

While my son has accommodations from his university, some of his professors have been reluctant to allow them. It would be wonderful if colleges provided training for their professors about disabilities and accommodations.

-Parent, Florida

1, 5 Source: NCLD May 2016 survey of over 800 parents on Understood.org.

2, 3, 6 Cortiella, Candace and Horowitz, Sheldon H. *The State of Learning Disabilities: Facts, Trends, and Emerging Issues*. New York: National Center for Learning Disabilities, 2014.

4 Newman, Wagner, Knokey, Marder, Nagle, et al. (2011), NLTS 2 Wave 5.

