



**CONSORTIUM FOR CITIZENS
WITH DISABILITIES**

July 16, 2019

The Honorable Frank Pallone
Chairman
Energy and Commerce Committee
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Greg Walden
Ranking Member
Energy and Commerce Committee
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Re: Autism CARES Act

Dear Chairman Pallone and Ranking Member Walden,

We, the undersigned members of the Developmental Disabilities, Autism and Family Support Task Force of the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD) are writing to express our support for the manager's amendment to the Autism Collaboration, Accountability, Research, Education, and Support (CARES) Act of 2019 (H.R. 1058) which advances priorities of the disability community and makes important technical changes. CCD is the largest coalition of national organizations working together to advocate for federal public policy that ensures the self-determination, independence, empowerment, integration and inclusion of children and adults with disabilities in all aspects of society.

President George W. Bush signed the original law (P.L. 109- 419) in 2006. The purpose of the law is to increase the federal government's response to the increasing numbers of individuals diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD). The law expanded and coordinated existing federal efforts: research being conducted within the National Institutes of Health (NIH), surveillance and awareness activities at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and professional development and research into evidence-based interventions at the Health, Resources, and Services Administration (HRSA). An Interagency Autism Coordinating Committee (IACC) ensures all federal agencies are coordinating their efforts, sharing information, and obtaining input from people on the autism spectrum and family members as well as other outside experts. Due to a sunset provision, important sections of the law will expire on September 30, 2019 if not reauthorized before that date.

The Autism CARES Act of 2019 provides several improvements, including a requirement for a report on the health and well-being of individuals with autism and greater emphasis on research on services and supports across the lifespan. In addition to making several technical changes, the manager's amendment increases the minimum number of individuals with ASD, parents or guardians, and representatives of leading organizations on the IACC from two to three each. We believe that people with disabilities in particular - including people with the most significant disabilities - should be at the center of research and policy regarding their lives and an additional member with ASD on the IACC is a welcome improvement.

We applaud you and your staff for listening to the autism and developmental disability communities in crafting the Autism CARES Act of 2019. We stand ready to work with you to help enact this critical legislation.

Sincerely,

American Academy of Pediatrics
American Music Therapy Association
American Network of Community Options and Resources
American Psychological Association
Association of University Centers on Disability
Autism Society of America
Autism Speaks
Easterseals
Family Voices
Madison House Autism Foundation
National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities
National Down Syndrome Congress
National Respite Coalition
TASH
The Arc of the United States