

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515
SUPPORT FUNDING FOR AUTISM RESEARCH!

Dear Colleague:

March 3, 2008

On behalf of the estimated 1.5 million American families affected by autism spectrum disorders, we urge you to help advance research and surveillance on this serious condition by joining us in sending the attached two letters to the DOD and Labor-HHS-Ed appropriations subcommittees. Autism is increasing at epidemic proportions - according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), it now strikes 1 in 150 of America's children. Autism remains a life-long burden for those who have the disability and for family members as well.

Both of these requests are program requests that do not require a member certification letter. Signing either letter will not count against your requested projects. The subcommittees do have differing requirements for submitting on-line program requests. Please specify if your boss wants to get on both letters or only DOD or only Labor-HHS-Ed.

(I). DOD Appropriations Subcommittee request: \$15 million for autism research in the DOD 2009 Appropriations Bill. The DOD subcommittee strongly encourages Members signing program letters to submit the request online – choose R,D,T&E Defense Health Programs as the account.

Many military families are touched by autism. Based on current prevalence rates, as many as 12,000 children in military families (active duty, reserve and guard) may have autism. These families are substantially affected by the financial and emotional costs of raising a child with autism. In fact, given the frequent duty station changes and social turmoil of military service, military children with an autism spectrum disorder often face additional challenges with which their civilian counterparts do not have to contend. Care for dependents with autism is also a significant direct cost to DOD.

(II). Labor, Health and Human Services, Education Subcommittee requests: full funding the 2nd year of the Combating Autism Act (CAA) in 2009. With your strong support, appropriators provided total FY2008 funding for HHS' autism activities at \$162.1 million out of \$168 million authorized, assuming autism receives proportional funding at NIH. Early implementation of the CAA is critical, because it directs HHS to begin coordinating all of these activities among the agencies that work on autism, including NIH, CDC, and the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). We hope you share our goal of making autism funding a priority by signing onto the attached letter.

The Labor-HHS-Ed subcommittee requires all signers of program letters to do an electronic submission and include the request in the Member's overall request letter. Separate electronic requests should be made for CDC- \$18 million for surveillance & research; HRSA- \$42 million for education, early detection, intervention; and NIMH- \$1 million for the Interagency Autism Coordinating Committee.

For more information or to add your name as a signatory to both or one of the letters by March 14, 2008, please contact Kenneth DeGraff (Rep. Doyle) at 5-2135 or Tim Lynagh (Rep. Smith) at 5-3765, or Peter Kay (Rep. McCarthy) at 5-5516.

Sincerely,


MIKE DOYLE


CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH


CAROLYN McCARTHY