June 12, 2024

Dear Member of Congress,

On behalf of the Autism Society of America, we strongly support the Autism CARES Act of 2024 (H.R. 7213), a bill approved by the Energy and Commerce Committee today. This bill builds on years of progress that has been made because of the previous versions of the Autism CARES Act and will help move forward critical research and training programs that will benefit the estimated 1 in 36 Autistic children and 1 in 45 Autistic adults in the United States.

The Autism CARES Act has been the single most important piece of legislation to invest funding in and coordinate programs in autism research and training programs in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, since first passing in 2006. It has led to improvements in early intervention services, a better understanding of the prevalence of autism, and a better understanding of the co-occurring health conditions that autistic people experience.

This bill improves the needs of those with Autism who have co-occurring complex medical and behavioral support needs and those with unaddressed communication needs. It also encourages more research on the impact of aging on people with Autism and how to assist them.

As far as we’ve come in terms of our understanding of Autism and acceptance, there’s so much work to do to ensure that every Autistic person can access personalized health care and services and supports that meet their needs. Significant gaps in access to these services persist. The additional research and training to address those gaps through the investments and improvements made by the Autism CARES Act of 2024 are absolutely vital to continuing progress and closing gaps.

We thank the leadership of the bipartisan Autism Caucus for their leadership on this bill. As the current version of the CARES Act expires on September 30, 2024, we urge the full House of Representatives to pass this bill as soon as possible.

Thank you for considering our views.

Sincerely,

Christopher Banks
President/Chief Executive Officer

cbanks@autismsociety.org