

# American Academy of Pediatrics

DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN™



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## Reply to

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May 23, 2014

The Honorable Chris Smith  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2373 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mike Doyle  
U.S. House of Representatives  
239 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Smith and Doyle:

On behalf of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), an organization of 62,000 primary care pediatricians, pediatric medical sub-specialists, and pediatric surgical specialists dedicated to the health, safety, and well-being of infants, children, adolescents, and young adults, I write to express our strong support for H.R. 4631, the *Combating Autism Reauthorization Act of 2014*.

Originally signed into law in 2006 and renewed in 2011, the *Combating Autism Act* and its subsequent reauthorization has enhanced our country's understanding of Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) through expansion of research at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), increased surveillance, awareness, and outreach at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and training of health care professionals through the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), particularly its Leadership in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities (LEND) program. All of these efforts at the respective agencies help improve research methods, as well as identify and support children with ASD and their families.

We are particularly pleased that H.R. 4631 would reauthorize the current *Combating Autism Act* programs at NIH, CDC and HRSA for an additional five years, through September 30, 2019. A five year reauthorization will be extremely helpful for planning and evaluating the important research conducted under the program. We are also pleased that the legislation continues a significant investment in ASD research and improving services for children with ASD and their families by allocating \$950 million over five years to fund the efforts at federal agencies.

ASD is one of our nation's top health priorities and as the CDC just recently reported, ASD now affects 1 in 68 children in the United States, including 1 in 44 boys. ASD is estimated to cost society \$137 billion per year. It is imperative that we continue the important work being done as a result of the *Combating Autism Act* by enacting this reauthorization legislation by September 30, 2014.

We are pleased to support the *Combating Autism Reauthorization Act of 2014*, and we applaud your efforts and leadership on this important issue. We look forward to working with you to ensure that our country continues to support the research required to better understand ASD. Thank you for all you do for our nation's children.

Sincerely,

James M. Perrin, MD, FAAP  
President

JMP/pmj