

The Honorable David Obey  
Chairman  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jerry Lewis  
Ranking Minority Member  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable James Walsh  
Ranking Minority Member  
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, Ed  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Obey and Ranking Members Lewis and Walsh:

We are writing to urge you, in the strongest possible terms, to fully fund the Combating Autism Act ("CAA") in 2008.

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, making it more common than pediatric cancer, diabetes, and AIDS combined. It occurs in all racial, ethnic, and social groups. Autism impairs a person's ability to communicate and relate to others, and remains a life-long burden, not only for those who have been diagnosed, but for parents and other family members as well.

Late last year, Congress very appropriately responded to this crisis by enacting the CAA. For Fiscal Year 2008, the CAA authorizes a total of \$168 million for a variety of critical autism activities, including: (1) \$16.5 million for the CDCP to conduct its Developmental Disabilities Surveillance and Research program; (2) \$37 million for the Secretary of Health and Human Services to carry out an Autism Education, Early Detection, and Intervention program; and, (3) \$114.5 million for the Secretary and the National Institutes of Health to operate an Interagency Autism Coordinating Committee, implement the expansion, intensification and coordination of research on autism spectrum disorder, and fund and review autism centers of excellence.

Both the House and the Senate passed these authorizations unanimously. We urge you to make funding the implementation of the CAA an equally bipartisan and universally supported effort.

Thank you for your consideration of this important request. If you have any questions or would like additional information, please contact Kenneth DeGraff (Rep. Mike Doyle) at 5-2135, Tim Lynagh (Rep. Chris Smith) at 5-3765, or Peter Kay (Rep. Carolyn McCarthy) at 5-5516.

Sincerely,