



**AUTISM SPEAKS™**  
It's time to listen.

July 11, 2007

Congressman Dave Weldon  
2347 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515-0915

Dear Congressman Weldon,

On behalf of Autism Speaks, I am writing to thank you for your leadership in support of reducing human exposure to mercury through vaccines. We would like to offer our formal endorsement of HR. 881, the Mercury-Free Vaccines Act of 2007.

Autism Speaks is concerned with the exposure of children and pregnant women to the potential effects of mercury. Our organization harbors the general principle that mercury is a ubiquitous environmental toxin and that exposure to all three of its forms, organic, inorganic, or elemental, can have adverse effects on the developing nervous system. While the body of evidence gathered through epidemiologic research to date does not support a causal relationship between thimerosal, a synthetic form of organic mercury, in childhood vaccines and autism risk, it is very difficult for even the best epidemiologic study to rule out the existence of small susceptible subgroups of children with autism in whom thimerosal exposure may have played a causal role. Since thimerosal-free versions of all childhood vaccines are commercially available and mercury is known to have adverse effects on the developing nervous system, Autism Speaks has chosen to endorse HR 881.

Like you, Autism Speaks believes that the Department of Health and Human Services should take all measures necessary to ensure that children up to six years and pregnant women are not exposed to the potentially harmful effects of mercury-containing vaccines. We commend you on your introduction of HR. 881 and on your efforts to limit the exposure of our country's most vulnerable individuals to this harmful neurotoxin. We also commend you on your call to make more information regarding mercury-containing vaccines available to the public. Public education is paramount to ensuring the safety of all our children.

Thank you again for your leadership on this important issue.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Emken  
Vice President, Government Relations  
Autism Speaks