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Autism CARES Act Passes Senate

President Obama Expected to Sign

SILVER SPRING, MD (July 31, 2014) — AUCD is so pleased that the Senate came together today to unanimously approve the “Autism Collaboration, Accountability, Research, Education, and Support Act of 2014” or the “Autism CARES Act” (S. 2449).

The bipartisan, bicameral bill reauthorizes the Combating Autism Act of 2006 as amended by the Combating Autism Reauthorization Act of 2011 for five years. Since its enactment, the law has impacted thousands of individuals with autism and other developmental disabilities and their families and has significant implications for future generations. Had Congress not reauthorized the law before September 30, activities authorized under the law would have expired due to a hard sunset.

The House and Senate worked together on a compromise bill that makes a few improvements to the current law. Besides changing the title of the law to better reflect what the law does and to be more respectful, amendments include designating an official within the Department of Health and Human Services to oversee the implementation of the law and ensure accountability; minor changes to the make-up and authority of the Interagency Autism Coordinating Committee (IACC); authorizing a review and federal report concerning challenges of youth with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) transitioning from school to post-secondary education, employment, and adult supports and services; and attention to the provision of respite services for families of children and adults with ASD.

“AUCD owes lead sponsors, Senators Robert Menendez (D-NJ) and Mike Enzi (R-WY) and Chris Smith (R-NJ) and Mike Doyle (D-PA) a debt of gratitude for their strong leadership on this issue,” said Kim Musheno, AUCD’s Director of Public Policy. “We are pleased to see that the Congress worked in a bipartisan, bicameral way to reach consensus on a bill to reauthorize a law that is so important to so many people with ASD and other DD and their families. We look forward to President Obama signing this bill into law”.

Leslie Cohen, AUCD President and Director of the Sonoran University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities at the University of Arizona said, “This bill is so important to continuing the important work the law set out to do: coordinate federal research efforts to better understand ASD, identify kids early, educate professionals and the public, and develop evidence-based interventions that are leading to services and supports for individuals with ASD and other developmental disabilities.”

About AUCD

AUCD is a national network of 67 University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDDs); 43 Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities (LEND) programs; and 15 Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Research

Centers (IDDRCs). As the prevalence of autism has risen, University Centers have initiated many activities to help meet the growing needs of children, adults, and families. Together, these programs have a national impact through direct services, the development of new professionals, and the application of new knowledge generated from research. For information about AUCD Interdisciplinary Technical Assistance Center on Autism and Developmental Disabilities, [visit ITAC](#). For a national directory of Centers, see AUCD's website at www.aucd.org.

For more information on the Combating Autism Act see, ["Report to Congress on Activities Related to Autism Spectrum Disorders and Other Developmental Disabilities Under the Combating Autism Act of 2006 and Combating Autism Reauthorization Act of 2011 \(FY 2010-FY 2012\)"](#).

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