

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 5, 2017

Chairman Tom Cole
House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS,
Education and Related Agencies
Washington DC, 20515

Ranking Member Rosa DeLauro
House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS,
Education and Related Agencies
Washington DC, 20515

Dear Chairman Cole and Ranking Member DeLauro,

On behalf of the more than one million American families affected by autism spectrum disorder (ASD, hereafter referred to as autism), we thank the Subcommittee for its leadership in designating autism funding in previous appropriations bills and we urge you to fully fund the fiscal year 2018 funding levels for the Department of Health and Human Services' autism activities as authorized by the Autism Collaboration, Accountability, Research, Education, and Support Act (or Autism CARES Act/PL 113-157), in your FY 2018 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies Appropriations bill.

According to the latest released data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), estimates are that 1 in 68 children have been identified with autism. Autism occurs in all racial, ethnic and social groups. In many cases, it impairs a person's ability to communicate and to relate to others, and remains a life-long challenge, not only for those who have been diagnosed, but for parents and other family members as well. The estimated total cost per year for children with autism in the United States is between \$11.5 billion and \$60.9 billion.

For FY 2018, we are specifically requesting at least the Autism CARES Act's authorized level for the National Institutes of Health and the Interagency Coordinating Committee, \$190 million; the authorization for CDC to conduct developmental disabilities surveillance and research activities; \$22 million; and for the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) to carry out autism education, early detection, and intervention programs, \$48 million.

This is a particularly exciting time for autism research. A recent report in the journal *Nature Neuroscience* involved the analysis of over 5,200 whole genomes from families affected by autism. That study, which is the largest whole genome study of autism to date, found 18 newly identified autism genes that affect the operation of a small subset of biological pathways in the brain. All of these pathways affect how brain cells develop and communicate with each other, providing a clear set of potential targets for future medicines. Given the important progress in the field, it is vital that we sustain and improve our investment in autism research.

The House and Senate passed the Autism CARES Act unanimously. Accordingly, we ask for your strong support for funding in the FY2018 Labor-HHS-Education bill especially to enable vigorous efforts to pursue much needed advances in autism research.

Sincerely,



Christopher H. Smith
Member of Congress



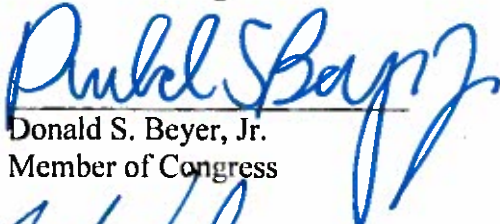
Donald M. Payne, Jr.
Member of Congress



Peter King
Member of Congress



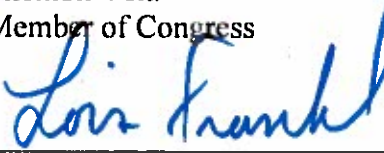
David Scott
Member of Congress



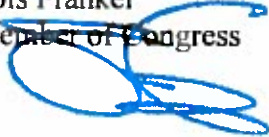
Donald S. Beyer, Jr.
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Filemon Vela
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Lois Frankel
Member of Congress



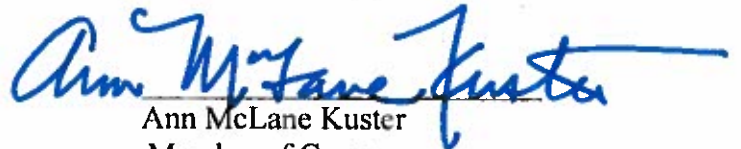
Sean Patrick Maloney
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Mike Doyle
Member of Congress



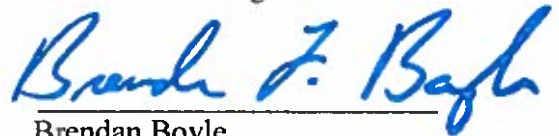
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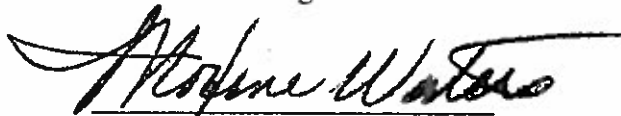
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Marc Veasey
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Maxine Waters
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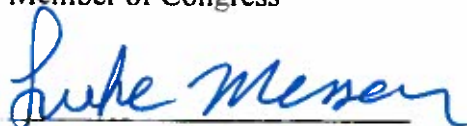
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Ted Deutch
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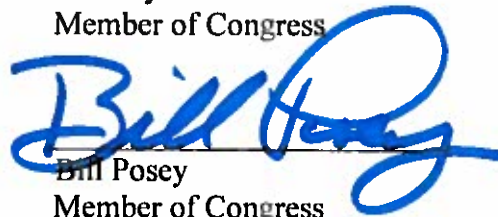
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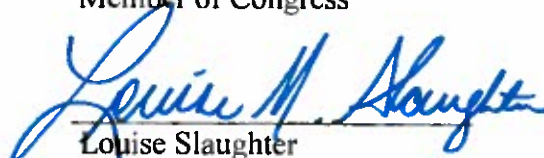
Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
Member of Congress



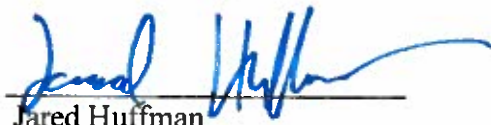
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