December 15, 2010

The Honorable Christopher Dodd
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Lamar Alexander
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Harkin
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Michael Enzi
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mike Crapo
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators:

On behalf of the Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD), this letter is to thank you for introducing and ensuring swift passage of S. 3817, the CAPTA Reauthorization Act of 2010. For the AUCD network, addressing the issue of child abuse and neglect is an integral part of both promoting the well-being of individuals with disabilities and their families, as well as preventing the development of disabilities. Indeed, cause and effect are intertwined when it comes to child maltreatment and disabilities. Children with disabilities are particularly vulnerable to child abuse, and maltreatment can cause disabilities.

The CAPTA Reauthorization Act of 2010 contains a number of improvements related to child abuse and disability. AUCD extends its deepest gratitude for the following important changes in S. 3817:

- Specifying that research programs may focus on the impact of child abuse and neglect on the incidence and progression of disabilities;
- Allowing grants to be awarded for the training of personnel in best practices to meet the unique needs of children with disabilities;
- Allowing grants for training to support linkages between Child Protective Service agencies, health care agencies, community resources and developmental disability agencies to improve screening, forensic diagnosis, and health and developmental evaluations;
- Requiring state reports to include the number of children determined to be eligible for referral, and the number of children referred to agencies providing early intervention services under Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act;
- Encouraging states to ensure that individuals with disabilities who participate in CAPTA programs are provided with materials and services through programs that are appropriate to their disabilities; and
• Adding respite care services to the list of core child abuse and neglect prevention services.

As the only federal program that provides primary prevention services for child abuse and neglect, CAPTA is essential to preventing the abuse and neglect of all children, including children with disabilities. AUCD applauds your efforts and leadership on this essential legislation.

Sincerely,

Daniel Crimmins, PhD
President