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## **House Passes Autism CARES Act Today**

SILVER SPRING, MD (June 24, 2014) — AUCD applauds the US House of Representatives for passing the "Autism Collaboration, Accountability, Research, Education, and Support Act of 2014" or the "Autism CARES Act" today. The bill (H.R. 4631) was passed under suspension of the rules.

This bill will reauthorize the Combating Autism Reauthorization Act of 2011 for five years. Congress must reauthorize the Combating Autism Act before September 30, when most of its provisions will expire.

"Since its enactment, the law has impacted millions of individuals with autism and other developmental disabilities and their families," said Leslie Cohen, JD, AUCD President and Director of the Sonoran University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities at the University of Arizona. "This law is so important to continuing the important work it 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."

The Senate Health Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee is scheduled to mark up the bill (S. 2449) tomorrow, June 25.

Senators Robert Menendez (D-NJ) and Mike Enzi (R-WY) are the lead sponsors of S. 2449; Chris Smith (R-NJ) and Mike Doyle (D-PA) co-sponsored H.R. 4631. Since these House and Senate leaders worked in a bipartisan, bicameral fashion to move identical companion bills, the law could be reauthorized before the July 4<sup>th</sup> recess.

The House and Senate bills make a few improvements to the existing 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 postsecondary education, employment, and adult supports and services; and attention to the provision of respite services for families of children and adults with ASD.

"AUCD is so pleased to see that Congress has 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," stated Kim Musheno, AUCD's Director of Public Policy. "We hope the Senate will take quick action as well."

## **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, our member 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's 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](http://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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