March 28, 2019

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Chairwoman
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS,
Education and Related Agencies
House Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tom Cole
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS,
Education and Related Agencies
House Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman DeLauro and Ranking Member Cole,

On behalf of the more than one million American families affected by autism spectrum disorder (ASD), 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 (FY) 2020 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 2020 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies Appropriations bill.

According to the latest data, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) estimates that 1 in 59 children have been identified with autism. Autism occurs in all racial, ethnic and social groups. In many cases, it impairs an individual’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 2020, we are requesting no less than the FY 2019 enacted appropriations level for the CDC to conduct developmental disabilities surveillance and research activities at $23.1 million; and for the Health Resources and Services Administration to carry out autism education, early detection, and intervention programs at $50.6 million. For the National Institutes of Health and the Interagency Coordinating Committee we request no less than the FY 2018 enacted level of $260 million.

Since the House and Senate passed the Autism CARES Act unanimously in 2014, these federal programs have enjoyed widespread support for the advances they’ve made for autistic individuals of all ages. Accordingly, we ask for your assistance to secure funding in the FY 2020 Labor-HHS-Education bill so we may further enable vigorous efforts to pursue much needed advances in autism research.

Sincerely,

CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH
Member of Congress

MIKE DOYLE
Member of Congress