Dear Chairman Pallone, Ranking Member Walden, Chairwoman Eshoo, and Ranking Member Burgess:

As cosponsors of H.R. 1058, *the Autism Collaboration, Accountability, Research, Education, and Support (CARES) Act of 2019*, and as members of the Congressional Coalition for Autism Research and Education, we respectfully request that the Energy & Commerce Committee consider H.R. 1058 as soon as possible in honor of Autism Awareness Month.

April is celebrated as Autism Awareness Month by advocates across the world, notably on April 2 which the United Nations recognizes as World Autism Awareness Day. Here in the United States, organizations such as Autism Speaks and Autism Society conduct awareness campaigns to help educate the public about Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). These organizations, which have endorsed HR 1058, would celebrate the Energy & Commerce Committee considering this life-changing legislation as soon as possible.

As you know, the Autism CARES Act of 2014 unanimously passed the House and Senate, reauthorizing essential services and supports related to ASD and other developmental disabilities (DD) that have been in place since 2000. This reauthorization expires upon the conclusion of Fiscal Year 2019 on September 30, 2019. If Congress allows these vital programs to expire it would be detrimental to individuals with ASD and DD of all ages, and their families who often act as caregivers.

We do not want to take risks by delaying the reauthorization of these programs and their appropriations at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), Centers for Disease Control (CDC), and the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). In addition to the surveillance, research, education, early detection and intervention, and the Interagency Autism Coordinating Committee activities that H.R. 1058 reauthorizes, the bill directs HRSA to prioritize grants for developmental-behavioral pediatricians in medically-underserved areas and introduces the phrase
“across the lifespan” to ensure individuals with ASD of all ages are receiving the supports and services they require.

We appreciate your time and consideration of our request. Should you have any questions regarding this request, please reach out to Kelsey Griswold in Rep. Smith’s office, or Kate Werley in Rep. Doyle’s office.

Sincerely,

CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH
Member of Congress

ELISSA SLOTKIN
Member of Congress

TED DEUTCH
Member of Congress

SETH MOULTON
Member of Congress

MAXINE WATERS
Member of Congress

MICHAEL E.Q. SAN NICOLAS
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