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Dear Member of Congress,

The Arc of the United States writes in strong support of the Autism CARES Act of 2024 (H.R. 7213) and urges you to cosponsor and support its swift passage in the House of Representatives.

The Arc of the United States has nearly 600 state and local chapters across the United States. These chapters provide a wide range of services for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD), including individual and systems advocacy, public education, family support, systems navigation, support coordination services, employment, housing, support groups, and recreation. The Arc chapters are committed to improving the lives of people with IDD and their families—which includes the estimated 1 in 36 autistic children and 1 in 45 autistic adults in the United States.

The Autism CARES Act bill builds on years of progress that has been made because of the previous versions of the bill and will continue to drive critical research and training programs. The Autism CARES Act has been the single most important piece of legislation to invest funding in and coordinate programs in autism research and training programs in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, since first passing in 2006. It has led to improvements in early intervention services, a better understanding of the prevalence of autism, and a better understanding of the co-occurring health conditions that autistic people experience.

Importantly, it has also been responsible for thousands of future health professionals being trained on how to screen, diagnose, and provide interventions to autistic people and other individuals with neurodevelopmental disabilities to improve their health and wellbeing. Thanks to the Autism CARES Act, many health professionals are better equipped to meet the ever-changing and diverse needs of autistic people and other people with neurodevelopmental disabilities.

Now more than ever, reauthorizing this law is critical. As far as we've come in terms of our understanding of autism and acceptance of autistic people – there's so much work to do to ensure that every autistic person can access personalized health care and services and supports that meet their needs. Significant gaps in access to these services persist. The additional research and training to address those gaps through the investments and improvements made by the Autism CARES Act of 2024 are absolutely vital to continuing progress and closing gaps.

As the current version of the CARES Act expires on September 30, 2024, we urge you to lend your support and push for swift consideration and passage of this incredibly important piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

The Arc of the United States