

May 25, 2016

The House Committee on Foreign Affairs  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2170 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Royce and Ranking Member Engel:

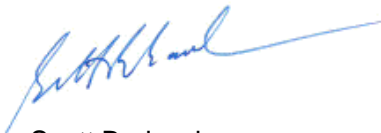
The Autism Society is writing in support of the amendment to the Department of State Operations Authorization and Embassy Security Act of Fiscal Year 2016, to improve access and coverage to Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA), speech, occupational, and physical therapies for dependents with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) of foreign service officers overseas.

The Autism Society is a national source of information, advocacy and support that reaches autism families, including families of military and foreign service officers, offering a one-of-a-kind nationwide network of autism knowledge and support. An organization with 51 years of heritage and heart, the Autism Society is dedicated to providing a trustworthy, respectful and caring network of people that truly impacts the lives of individuals with ASD.

Therapeutic intervention strategies, including ABA, are effective in developing skills, including communication and behavior, and improving outcomes for people with ASD. Despite the proven and widely recognized benefits of these interventions, access to them remains difficult. Much like military personnel, foreign service officers move frequently which can be particularly challenging for children with autism, and their families struggle to access and receive treatment that could bring about a positive change. Representative Smith's amendment works to correct this issue and is a step in the right direction by having the Department of State provide meaningful coverage to dependents with ASD.

Thank you for your leadership to improve access to therapeutic health services for all State Department beneficiaries with autism. Please let us know how we can assist you in advancing this measure through the legislative process. If you have any questions, please contact Tonia Ferguson, [tferguson@autism-society.org](mailto:tferguson@autism-society.org).

Sincerely,



Scott Badesch  
President and CEO