



May 1, 2019

The Honorable Chris Smith  
United States Representative  
2373 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Karen Bass  
United States Representative  
2059 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Smith and Representative Bass:

On behalf of the American Network of Community Options and Resources (ANCOR), I am writing to thank you for introducing Global Brain Health Act of 2019 (H.R. 2077). We wish to express our support for this important piece of legislation, which recognizes the importance of and seeks to enrich the supports non-governmental organizations (NGOs) offer to people on the autism spectrum abroad. We are grateful for your work on this issue.

ANCOR is a national, nonprofit trade association representing more than 1,600 private community providers of services to people with disabilities. Combined, we support over one million individuals with disabilities, and work to shape policy, share solutions and strengthen the community. Our members support people with autism in the U.S. as well as internationally and demonstrate first-hand how the charitable and private sectors can enrich efforts by local governments to improve the lives of people with disabilities.

With advances in medicine leading to [more diagnoses across the globe](#), and [earlier diagnoses](#), it is important for the U.S. to signal to the world the importance of understanding autism. People with autism face numerous challenges, including vulnerability to attacks, abuse and harassment because they are misunderstood. In fact, the [BBC reported on a 2017 study](#) finding that half of people with autism are afraid to leave their house because of those fears. The [World Health Organization](#) notes this in their key facts on autism: "Worldwide, people with ASD are often subject to stigma, discrimination and human rights violations. Globally, access to services and support for people with ASD is inadequate." As such, we welcome the provisions in your bill supporting public awareness and education on autism.

We also appreciate the thoughtfulness you and your staff have shown in making the bill well-rounded. The bill's grant program for NGOs that assist families shows an understanding of the importance of early intervention and systemic supports at an individual level. Additionally, the "teach the teacher" component of the Global Brain Health Act promises to improve a child or adult with autism's health care and social life by targeting teachers and health professionals. Not only would well-equipped professionals offer better supports and care to the individual, but they would also set an example for peers on how to respect and support the individual. Given the importance of a person developing natural supports such as friends, colleagues and romantic partners, the efforts supported by your bill could carry over into every aspect of an individual's life. We are grateful that your bill shows the importance of supporting individuals in a holistic manner.

We look forward to continuing to work with you, and thank you again for your consideration of this important issue. Please feel free to reach out to me with any questions or requests. I can be contacted by email at [smeek@ancor.org](mailto:smeek@ancor.org) or (703) 535 7850, extension 104.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sarah Meek". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sarah Meek, MSW  
Director of Legislative Affairs  
American Network of Community Options and Resources

Cc: House Energy & Commerce Committee Chair Frank Pallone  
House Energy & Commerce Committee Ranking Member Greg Walden  
House Foreign Affairs Committee Chair Eliot Engel  
House Foreign Affairs Committee Ranking Member Michael McCaul