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May 8, 2019

The Honorable Kim Schrier  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1123 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable James Comer  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1037 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Schrier and Comer:

On behalf of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), a non-profit professional organization of 67,000 primary care pediatricians, pediatric medical sub-specialists, and pediatric surgical specialists dedicated to the health, safety and well-being of infants, children, adolescents, and young adults, I am writing to share our endorsement of the *Stronger Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act of 2019* (H.R. 2480).

As many as 25 percent of children in the United States have experienced some form of maltreatment. Pediatricians have long supported the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) because it is an essential federal policy tool for preventing and responding to child maltreatment. CAPTA provides critical support to states and non-profit community-based organizations for services to prevent and treat child abuse and neglect. While CAPTA is critically important, limited federal funding has historically impeded its ability to create meaningful change for vulnerable children and families. This bipartisan legislation would create major progress and support efforts to apply a public health approach to preventing and addressing child maltreatment.

The *Stronger Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act* would reauthorize and strengthen CAPTA to better promote child health and well-being. Crucially, the bill authorizes \$270 million for Title I state grants and \$270 million for Title II community-based prevention and state system improvement in FY2020. The AAP strongly supports this critical funding increase, which would improve CAPTA's ability to create meaningful change for vulnerable children and families. In addition, the AAP supports the bill's restructuring of CAPTA to shift away from lists of state assurances to intentional strategic planning. This will improve the quality and accountability of CAPTA-financed activities.

H.R. 2480 also shifts CAPTA toward a public health focus on prevention of child abuse. The bill streamlines CAPTA research topics to focus on understudied areas such as how to best address trauma, promote racial equity, and serve families with substance use disorders in child welfare systems. The Academy strongly supports the inclusion of a provision to allow funds for research into "sentinel" injuries. This will help develop practices for improving early detection and management of injuries indicative of potential abuse, preventing further maltreatment and fatalities.

The AAP also supports the bill's requirement for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to create standardized definitions for fatalities and near-fatalities related to maltreatment, and to require data tracking on those incidents. These data will be essential to applying a public health approach to child maltreatment, enabling researchers, policymakers, and practitioners to learn how to better prevent maltreatment from studying the most tragic outcomes.

The AAP also supports the bill's creation of a new interstate maltreatment registry system. This policy would support essential information sharing to ensure that information about maltreatment a child has experienced can cross state lines. Currently, states do not readily share this information, which can lead to missed opportunities to intervene and protect children from further harm. This is vital to protecting children and preventing child fatalities.

Child maltreatment is a preventable but pervasive public health problem. This bipartisan legislation offers critically needed innovative approaches to improving child welfare systems. The Academy supports this legislation and looks forward to working with you to advance these important policies. If the AAP can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact Zach Laris in our Washington, D.C. office at 202/347-8600 or [zlaris@aap.org](mailto:zlaris@aap.org).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kyle E. Yasuda, MD, FAAP". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Kyle E. Yasuda, MD, FAAP  
President  
KEY/zml