

WASHINGTON (September 16) – Congressman Spencer Bachus (AL-6) said children and families affected by autism, as well as supporters in the autism community, should be heartened by a pending vote to renew the landmark Combating Autism Act of 2006.

A three-year extension of the historic legislation is scheduled to be considered by the full House next Tuesday, according a schedule released today by House leadership. Bachus wrote a letter to Majority Leader Eric Cantor on September 9 requesting a floor vote on the bill.

Congressman Bachus, a prime sponsor of the legislation said, “Major strides are being made in the treatment and understanding of autism, bringing comfort and hope to families in Alabama and across the country. The early intervention, research and cooperation brought about by the Combating Autism Act have contributed to these advancements. This is an important bipartisan cause and I am confident that Tuesday’s vote will reaffirm the strong commitment of Congress to address autism and its many consequences.”

The reauthorization bill provides for an additional three years of federal support for research, services, and treatment for autism and related behavioral disorders. It also requires the development of a strategic plan to improve the coordination of federal efforts to help persons with autism and their families.

Bachus supported the original Combating Autism Act, which was signed into law by President George W. Bush in 2006. It described the growing incidence of autism and behavioral disorders as a public health emergency. The Centers for Disease Control estimates that an average of 1 in 110 children in the U.S. is affected by an autism spectrum disorder.

