

February 20, 2019

The Honorable Reginald Jones-Sawyer, Chair
Committee on Public Safety
1020 N Street, Room 111

RE: AB-189 (Kamlager-Dove) Child abuse or neglect: mandated reporters
AAP-CA Position: Support

Dear Chair Jones-Sawyer:

The American Academy of Pediatrics, California (AAP-CA) representing over 5,000 California pediatricians strongly supports bill AB 189 (Kamlager-Dove) to add qualified autism service providers, professionals, and paraprofessionals to the list of mandated reporters of child abuse in California.

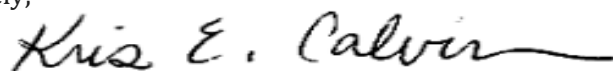
Behavioral therapists who implement therapy such as Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) often have direct insight into a child's life in multiple settings, including the school and home, offering the opportunity to witness child neglect and abuse. Children with autistic spectrum disorder (ASD), particularly those with severe receptive and expressive communication disorders and intellectual disability, are frequently unable to advocate for themselves. If these children are being physically and/or verbally abused and neglected, they need a trusted, responsible individual who has the capacity to advocate for their safety. By adding autism service providers and paraprofessionals to the list of mandated reporters, more children will potentially be recognized and subsequently protected from continued maltreatment.

Children with ASD are more than twice as likely to be physically abused in comparison to typically developing children. According to one study that included caregiver reports, 18% of children with ASD had been physically abused. We must promote awareness and enhance reporting non-accidental trauma. AB 189 (Kamlager-Dove) would add qualified autism service providers, professionals, and paraprofessionals to the list of mandated reporters of child abuse in California and help protect these children who are two times more likely to suffer abuse.

California pediatricians respectfully urge your AYE vote on AB 189 to support the health and well-being of California's children by adding specified autism services delivery professionals to the list of mandated reporters of child abuse.

Thank you for your leadership and public service on behalf of California's children and families.

Sincerely,



Kris Calvin
Chief Executive Officer
American Academy of Pediatrics, California

cc: AAP-CA Leadership; Lobbyist Lydia Bourne; the Honorable Sydney Kamlager-Dove; Chloe Kupelian, MD Senior Policy Analyst