



March 9, 2016

The Honorable Chuck Grassley, Chairman  
United States Senate Committee on the Judiciary  
224 Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510-6050

Senator Charles Schumer, Member  
United States Senate Committee on the Judiciary  
224 Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510-6050

***Re: S. 2614, Kevin and Avonte's Law***

Dear Chairman Grassley and Senator Schumer;

On behalf of the undersigned member organizations of the Autism Safety Coalition (ASC), we thank you for your strong leadership in introducing S. 2614, *Kevin and Avonte's Law*, to combat wandering-related injuries and deaths in those with developmental disabilities.

As you may know, [a 2015 study](#) found that almost one third of school age children with developmental disabilities are reported to wander or elope from safe settings each year. Far too often, these incidents end in tragedy. Since 2011, nearly 100 individuals with autism lost their lives after wandering from a safe environment. Most recently, they include:

- Sidney Heidrick, age seven, who died after wandering from his grandmother's home in Ohio
- Andrew Carter, age nine, who was struck and killed by a train after wandering from his home in Alabama
- Jayliel Vega, age five, who died after wandering from his Pennsylvania home on New Year's Eve
- Omarion Humphrey, age nine, who wandered from a foster provider and was found dead after a massive search in Michigan
- Jayden Morrison, age four, who died after wandering from his grandmother's home in South Carolina during a holiday visit

If enacted, *Kevin and Avonte's Law* would provide the necessary resources and training for first responders to better prevent and respond to these cases, and facilitate the development of training and emergency protocols for school personnel and other community officials. The bill would also be used to establish or enhance notification and communications systems for the recovery of missing children with autism. We feel strongly these efforts will serve as a critical step in addressing this growing crisis.

As national organizations working together to advocate for policies that will increase the public safety of people with autism and other developmental disabilities, the Autism Safety Coalition stands in full support of S. 2614 and we applaud your commitment to protecting our nation's most vulnerable citizens.

Sincerely,

The Arc  
Autism Society  
Autism Speaks  
National Autism Association  
The Color of Autism Foundation  
American Network of Community Options and Resources  
SafeMinds  
TACA