FASD Respect Act Signed into Law, Delivering Support to Individuals with FASD

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by

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Landmark legislation marks milestone in FASD policy, safeguarding and updating FASD programs and services

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Thanks to the advocacy of families across the country, the FASD Respect Act has been signed into law, following passage by the U.S. Congress as part of the SUPPORT for Patients and Communities Reauthorization Act of 2025 (HR.2483). Nearly twenty years after authorization for Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) expired, this milestone in FASD policy will facilitate a comprehensive Federal response to prenatal alcohol exposure, empowering individuals and families impacted by FASD and enhancing our nation's public health.

Following passage by the U.S. House of Representatives on June 4, 2025, and the U.S. Senate on September 18, 2025, the President's signature on the SUPPORT Act is the culmination of the tireless work of advocates from across the country. Families and self-advocates living with FASD came together this past September during FASD Awareness Month for the largest ever day of FASD advocacy on Capitol Hill as part of National FASD Impact Week. Today's achievement is proof positive of the strength and power of the FASD community in action.

As we celebrate this historic achievement and look forward to implementation, the work continues to improve the lives of individuals with FASD. We remain steadfast in our efforts as we move towards our vision of a fully FASD-informed world, in which the Federal response and investment in FASD matches its prevalence and impact.

FASD describes the range of lifelong physical, mental, and behavioral effects that can occur in an individual prenatally exposed to alcohol. An estimated 1 in 20 Americans are affected by FASD, most of whom are not diagnosed.

The authorizing language, The FASD Respect Act, has been a several years long bipartisan effort led by Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) and Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) in the Senate and Betty McCollum (D-MN) and Don Bacon (R-NE) in the House to address FASD on the national level and positively impact the lives of people across the country living with FASD and prenatal substance exposure.

FASD Respect Act co-author Senator Lisa Murkowski says, “This legislation will build a more informed and responsive system of care for those with FASD by strengthening prevention efforts, expanding diagnostic capacity, and improving coordination across states, Tribes, and local communities. Today belongs to the many advocates, families, and healthcare professionals who have worked tirelessly to improve outcomes for those with FASD.”

Co-author Senator Amy Klobuchar states, “Our bipartisan bill increases federal support for local, evidence-based services for people with FASD and their families. This progress is possible thanks to the tireless advocacy of former Minnesota First Lady Susan Shepard Carlson, who has led this fight for more than two and a half decades.”

FASD United CEO Tom Donaldson says, “With today’s signing of the FASD Respect Act into law, our Federal Government has taken an enormous step toward fulfilling its promise to the FASD community. This milestone is a testament to the tireless determination of a movement powered by the FASD living experience. Co-authors Lisa Murkowski and Amy Klobuchar, and their partners in the House, Betty McCollum and Don Bacon, are forever heroes. Now, it’s on us to ensure the robust implementation of each of the provisions in the FASD Respect Act.”

The legislation provides much needed national focus and support for FASD prevention and support to those with FASD. Specifically, it directs the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to promote and fund FASD education and awareness, and promotion of FASD-informed services, as well as resources to States and Tribes to address FASD in their existing systems of care.

Laura Bousquet, a longtime dedicated advocate for FASD support reflects, “As a mom and self-advocate, I see the FASD provisions in the SUPPORT Act as a turning point. It acknowledges FASD as a lifelong, whole-body condition and ensures families are no longer left navigating this journey alone.”

Susan Shepard Carlson, past FASD United Board Chair, retired juvenile court justice, and former First Lady of Minnesota, says, “This movement started and nobody gave up. It has been a united effort, and I am filled with gratitude for the FASD community. The leadership from our Congressional Champions and their staffs has been remarkable.”

FASD United is a public health advocacy nonprofit organization that serves as the national hub for FASD. FASD United is dedicated to empowering people living with FASD and prenatal substance exposure to educate systems of care and the public, enact policies, and unite communities everywhere.