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1150 Connecticut Ave., NW | Suite 300 | Washington, DC 20036
P 202-785-7900 | F 202-785-7950 | www.heart.org

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October 26, 2015

The Honorable Gus Bilirakis
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Adam Schiff
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Bilirakis and Congressman Schiff,

The American Heart Association thanks you for introducing the Congenital Heart Futures Reauthorization Act of 2015. This legislation would be an important step forward for children and adults living with congenital heart disease.

Congenital heart defects (CHD) are the most common birth defect in the U.S. and the leading killer of infants with birth defects. Advances in the diagnosis and treatment of heart defects have helped many more children born with this disorder live longer lives. However, CHD cannot be cured and even survivors of a successful childhood intervention face life-long risks, including heart failure, rhythmic disorders, stroke, renal dysfunction, and neurocognitive problems. Delays in care can result in premature death and disability, as well as increased healthcare costs. In 2004, hospital costs for all individuals with CHD totaled \$2.6 billion.

The Congenital Heart Futures Reauthorization Act would help increase research and awareness of congenital heart problems. This legislation would direct the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to conduct a cohort study examining the epidemiology of CHD across the lifespan, authorize a public awareness campaign, and require the National Institutes of Health to issue a report about their ongoing research efforts and future research plans so that we can effectively build on previous advances.

Our nation has made a lot of progress in the treatment of heart diseases and stroke but we still have a long way to go – particularly for congenital heart disease survivors. Thank you again for your leadership on this issue.

Sincerely,

Sue A. Nelson
Vice President, Federal Advocacy
American Heart Association | American Stroke Association

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cardiovascular diseases and stroke."*

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