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**Press Statement on House Passage of Child Health Legislation
by Renée R. Jenkins, MD, FAAP, president, American Academy of Pediatrics**

“The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) commends the U.S. House of Representatives for passing three vitally important child health bills today.

“The Wakefield Act (H.R. 2464) renews the vital Emergency Medical Services for Children (EMSC) program. Over the past 20 years, the EMSC program has driven changes that have helped lead to a 40 percent reduction in deaths among children due to unintentional injuries. The Wakefield Act will allow the EMSC program to continue its vital work in improving the emergency medical care provided to our nation’s children. The Academy recognizes Reps. Jim Matheson (D-UT), Peter King (R-NY) and Dave Reichert (R-WA) for their tireless work championing this program.

“The Early Hearing Detection and Intervention Act (H.R. 1198) supports state efforts to screen all newborns for hearing loss. Studies have shown repeatedly that early detection and intervention are critical. This legislation will empower states to improve their screening programs as well as to ensure that affected children are receiving appropriate services.

“Over the past five years, our nation has seen a dramatic increase in the testing performed by states to detect rare metabolic diseases among infants. The Newborn Screening Saves Lives Act (S. 1858) expands and improves the supports offered by the Federal government to ensure that states have the resources necessary to ensure that all newborns receive the necessary tests and appropriate follow-up care.

“The AAP congratulates members of the U.S. House for putting children first today and passing these three vitally important bills. We urge President Bush to sign the Newborn Screening Saves Lives Act into law as soon as possible and we urge the U.S. Senate to quickly vote on the Wakefield Act and the Early Hearing Detection and Intervention Act. These bills will help sustain and improve the health care provided to our nation’s children.”

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The American Academy of Pediatrics is an organization of 60,000 primary care pediatricians, pediatric medical subspecialists and pediatric surgical specialists dedicated to the health, safety and well being of infants, children, adolescents and young adults.