



September 7, 2017

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW 20500

Dear Mr. President:

Easterseals urges you to maintain the J-1 Camp Counselor program and the use of the Summer Work Travel program. For nearly 100 years, Easterseals has been an indispensable resource for people with disabilities and their families. We exist to provide the best services and opportunities to more than one million people through a network of 74 affiliates across the country. Summer camp is one of our core services, where children and adults with disabilities have the opportunity to learn new skills, make new friends and gain independence at the same time their families and caregivers are afforded an essential respite, allowing them to tend to other family matters. Every year, nearly 40,000 children and adults participate in one of Easterseals recreation and camping programs across the country.

Our experience has demonstrated that there are not enough American students and workers to fill our camp jobs. For example, this summer, Easterseals Iowa posted 72 camp counselor positions. Five Americans applied and were hired, the remaining 67 positions were filled with international staff. This camp would not be able to meet the needs of its community without these international workers.

Many of our campers require the specialized supports that are only available at an Easterseals camp. Accessible grounds and facilities, adapted equipment and trained staff allow participants to accomplish what they may never have thought was possible - like swimming, traversing a river or playing wheelchair tennis. Parents gain the peace of mind that their child is treated with respect and care while having a great time. As one parent commented, "Without camp, we would not be able to go on vacation, we wouldn't be able to get away from the constant caregiving. We would always be stressed out. Respite is very important."

Please maintain the J-1 Camp Counselor program and the use of the Summer Work Travel program.

Thank you for considering our views.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Katherine Beh Neas". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Katherine Beh Neas
Executive Vice President, Public Affairs