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Stigmatizing *Saturday Night Live* Sketch Highlights Urgent Need
to Address FASD, the Nation's Leading Cause of Developmental Disabilities

FASD UNITED CALLS ON CONGRESS TO PASS THE
FETAL ALCOHOL SPECTRUM DISORDERS RESPECT ACT

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WASHINGTON, D.C., January 21, 2022 – FASD United, the nation's leading voice in support of children and adults living with fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASD), calls for prompt action on the pending FASD Respect Act to address and remedy the stigma and harm due to lack of FASD awareness, education, resources, and services -- painfully evident in the January 15 *Saturday Night Live (SNL)* "Winter Formal" skit's stigmatizing portrayal of a character with the disability.

"The FASD community has exploded with outrage at the SNL sketch that mocked one character for his disabilities from prenatal alcohol exposure and climaxed with another character boasting she drank while pregnant," reported FASD United President Tom Donaldson. "Families affected by FASD are deeply, justifiably concerned over the lack of understanding of FASD and harmful misrepresentation of people living with FASD." Explained FASD United Board Member Lucas Boyce, "A person with an FASD, like me, may experience challenges, but we also have great talents, strengths, and ability to lead highly successful and productive lives with proper support."

FASD United Legislative and Policy Chair Susan Shepard Carlson said, "We cannot continue to stigmatize, exploit or overlook individuals living with FASD. Society at large, especially child welfare, health and human services, education, and other systems must become more FASD-informed and better resourced to serve such individuals and their families. Congress can and should promptly respond by passing the FASD Respect Act (S.2238, H.R.4151), to authorize comprehensive support services, public health prevention, and research programs across federal departments and agencies. This essential legislation will build on the limited federal response to FASD, advance research, and help build state, local, tribal and private sector collaborations to ensure essential services for persons with FASD and their families."

FASD describes the range of lifelong physical, mental, and behavioral impairments that can occur in an individual prenatally exposed to alcohol. As reported in *JAMA: The Journal of the American Medical Association*, FASD affects as many as 1 in 20 school-age children in the U.S. According to a 2022 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention *Mortality and Morbidity Weekly Report*, 1 in 7 pregnancies are exposed to alcohol. The annual cost for each individual with FASD (including health care, special education, residential care, lost productivity, and juvenile and criminal justice expenses) is estimated at \$30,945, for a total annual cost to society of \$205 billion.

FASD United is the only international public health advocacy nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting children and adults living with FASD and preventing prenatal exposure to alcohol, drugs, and other substances known to harm fetal development. More information on FASD United and the FASD Respect Act can be found at fasdunited.org.

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