



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Charles J. Fuschillo Jr.

Fuschillo & McDonald Call on Senate Leadership to Immediately Bring Autism Insurance Bill To Senate Floor for a Vote

CHARLES J. FUSCHILLO JR. May 27, 2010

| ISSUE: **DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES**

Senator Roy McDonald and Senator Charles J. Fuschillo, Jr. today called on the leadership of the New York State Senate to immediately bring legislation providing insurance coverage for autism diagnosis and treatment to the floor of the Senate for a vote. The legislation enjoys widespread support with 48 of 62 Senators serving as co-sponsors.

Senator McDonald (R-Saratoga) said, “With autism spectrum disorders now occurring in a staggering 1 in 91 newborns, this developmental disability has reached epidemic proportions. We need to take care of the members of our communities who have been affected by autism and similar type developmental disabilities. It’s time for New York to become a leader in providing services and ensuring protections for those with autism. The Senate leadership must immediately bring this bill to the Senate floor.”

Senator Fuschillo (R-Merrick) said, “Parents who have children with autism are in desperate need of insurance to cover costly and necessary treatments. This bill enjoys widespread support in the State Senate, with 48 Senators serving as co-sponsors. There is absolutely no reason not to bring this legislation to a vote immediately and get these families the help they need.”

Currently, children with autism throughout New York State are routinely denied insurance benefits for treatment of their disorder, forcing their parents to pay for these therapy costs. Therapy for children with autism typically run between \$20,000 and \$50,000 per year.

The legislation (S. 7000-A) would require private insurance companies to provide coverage for diagnosis of autism and for medically approved treatments for individuals with autism throughout their entire lifetime. Only treatments and therapies which have been determined by recognized medical authority as evidence-based and clinically proven are covered under the measure.

Michael Giangregorio of Merrick, who has a son with autism, said, “Families across the state are mortgaging homes, depleting savings and borrowing from 401k's to provide for their child with autism. We are paying for health insurance that does not provide for the coverage we desperately need. It is time we ended insurance discrimination against individuals with autism.

Senators McDonald and Fuschillo have long advocated for children with autism. Senator McDonald is the Chairman of the New York State Senate Task Force on Autism and Similar Type Developmental Disabilities and chaired a similar task force when he was in the Assembly. McDonald has a firsthand

relationship with the issue, as he is the grandfather to Jacob and David, both of whom have been diagnosed with Autism. He is also the prime sponsor of legislation to establish an “Autism Bill of Rights” to protect the rights of individuals diagnosed on the autistic spectrum.

Senator Fuschillo has pushed for autism insurance coverage for several years and authored a law to ensure that patients with autism receive equitable coverage for care from insurance companies. He also wrote the law authorizing the issuance of special autism license plates that raise money for a state autism awareness and research fund.

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