



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas K. Duane

## Passing Landmark Autism Insurance Reform

THOMAS K. DUANE June 17, 2011

On June 17, the Senate passed landmark legislation requiring insurance companies to provide coverage for the screening, diagnosis and treatment of autism spectrum disorders, including behavioral health treatments, speech therapy, occupational therapy and physical therapy.

I worked closely with the bill's prime sponsor Senator Charles Fuschillo (R–Merrick), Senate Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities Committee Chair Roy McDonald (R–Saratoga), Senate Insurance Committee Ranker Neil Breslin (D, WFP–Albany) and Senate Health Chair Kemp Hannon (R, C, I–Garden City) to craft this comprehensive legislation which will provide relief to countless New York families suffering from the financial toll that comes with autism.

Under the new legislation, insurance companies would be prohibited from terminating coverage or refusing to renew, adjust, amend, issue or execute a policy solely because an individual has been diagnosed with or received treatment for autism spectrum disorders.

Last year, Governor David Paterson shamefully vetoed similar legislation during the final months of his tenure. The bill, which previously passed the State Assembly, will now be sent to Governor Andrew Cuomo for his approval.