

**The Convergence of Science, Advocacy  
and Public Policy in Forging Systemic Change  
for Children with ASDs and their Families**

**PART 1 – The California Agenda**



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Vice Chair, CA Legislative Blue Ribbon Commission on Autism

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**The Changing Landscape of Autism  
A New Era of Help and Hope  
Propelling Systemic Change Through:**

- Increasing Awareness
- Expanding basic and applied Research
- The greater focus on the development and use of evidence-based best practices
- Intensified advocacy
- Accelerated Public Policy Reform efforts

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**THE CALIFORNIA AGENDA  
CALIFORNIA LEGISLATIVE BLUE  
RIBBON COMMISSION**

**Hon. Darrell Steinberg**  
Chair

**Dr. Barbara Firestone**  
Vice-Chair

Ms. Cindy Asner - Ms. Magdalena Beltran-del Olmo  
Mr. Stephen Beneto - Ms. Maureen Burness - Dr. Rudy Castruita  
Dr. David Feinberg - Dr. Ronald Huff - Mr. David Kears  
Dr. Lynn Koegel - Ms. Areva Martin, Esq. - Mr. Rick Rollens  
Mr. Kenneth Simril - Ms. Eleni Tsakopoulos-Kounalakis - Dr. Albert Wang

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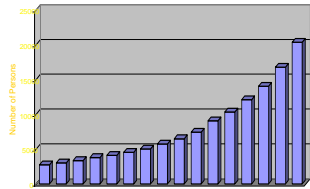
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### The Autism Epidemic: Prevalence of Autism



- 1970 - 1 in every 10,000 births
- 1993 - 1 in every 1,000 births
- 1995 - 1 in every 750 births
- 1998 - 1 in every 500 births

#### PRESENTLY

- 1 in every 150 births
- 1 in every 94 male births

Increase In Autism in California from 1987-2002

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### AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS : A Public Health Crisis

#### National Statistics on ASD

- ASD now affects 1 in 150 children
- ASD now affects 1 in 94 boys
- A child is diagnosed once every 20 minutes
- There are over 24,000 new cases diagnosed annually
- ASD is more prevalent than juvenile diabetes, childhood cancer & pediatric AIDS combined.
- ASD is fastest growing serious developmental disability
- There are almost 2 million cases of ASD
- The economic impact of autism is over \$90 billion annually

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### AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS : A Public Health Crisis

#### California Statistics on ASD (cont.)

- Dept. of Developmental Services & Regional Centers
- Caseload increased 634% from 1987 to 2002
  - Currently there are almost 35,000 consumers with ASD
  - 84% are under the age of 22 years
  - Annual net increase of 3,200 cases of ASD
  - ASD now represents almost two-thirds of all new cases
  - Currently there are more cases of ASD than of Cerebral Palsy
  - Regional Centers probably serve only about 20% of ASD

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## AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS : A Public Health Crisis

### California Statistics on ASD (cont.)

#### School Districts

- Almost 35,000 students with ASD in special education
- Most districts have doubled ASD students in just the past 4 years
- Proportion of students with ASD in special education has increased >400% in past 9 years
- There has been >1000% increase in ASD students K-12 during past 12 years

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## The California Legislative Blue Ribbon Commission on Autism

- Legislation authored by Senate President Pro Tem, Don Perata and supported by former Assembly Speaker Fabian Nunez
- Enacted in 2005
- Senate Concurrent Resolution – SCR 51 – Sponsored by The Help Group
- Receives Unanimous & bipartisan support



Senate President Pro Tem Don Perata, Dr. Barbara Firestone, Former Assembly Speaker, Assemblymember Fabian Núñez

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## The California Legislative Blue Ribbon Commission on Autism

### Autism Commission Goals

Identify Existing Problems & Gaps

Review Potential Strategies

Provide Specific Recommendations



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## The California Legislative Blue Ribbon Commission on Autism

### Factors and Considerations

- Consumers, parents, & families as well as individuals working in the field must be involved
- The state should have a clear role and responsibility to address these issues
- The solutions should be clearly identified
- The solutions should be reasonable & feasible to implement.
- The solutions should have outcomes that can be monitored & measured
- The solutions should have the potential to effect broad "systems change"

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## The California Legislative Blue Ribbon Commission on Autism



### THE PROCESS

#### Commission Forms Three Task Forces

1. Early identification & intervention
2. Education & continuous treatment
3. The "aging out" of children

Task Forces Submit Reports, March 1, 2007

Statewide Town Hall Meetings

Final Report to Governor & Legislature, September 2007

Legislation Extends Commission to November 2008

The Commission's Recommendations Lay the Groundwork for the Autism Legislative Package

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## The Autism Commission's Report to the Governor & Legislature

### The Commission Developed Policy Recommendations Related To

1. Building Models of Integrated, Comprehensive Services for Early Identification & Intervention
2. Ensuring Appropriate and Equitable Coverage for ASD by Private Health Plans & Insurers
3. The ASD Public Health Crisis: Improving Access to Services & Navigating Complex Systems of Care
4. Preparing Teachers & Other School-Based Personnel to Educate Children with ASD
5. Resolving Service Disputes Effectively & Equitably
6. Designing New Employment & Housing Strategies for Individuals with ASD
7. Increasing Awareness and Knowledge of ASD among Law Enforcement Officers & Other First Responders

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**April 2, 2008 Press Conference in Sacramento  
Announcing the Autism Legislative Package**

Dr. Barbara Firestone, Sen. Tom Torlakson, Sen. Don Perata,  
Sen. Darrell Steinberg, Dr. Lou Vismara



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**Autism Legislative Package: 2007-2008 Session**

- SB 527 – Early Identification of ASD (Sen. Steinberg)
- SB 1475 – Pilot on Transitional Services for Early ASD Treatment (Sen. Torlakson)
- SB 1563 – Health Insurance Coverage of ASD (Sen. Perata)
- SB 1364 – Addressing the Public Health Crisis of ASD in California (Sen. Cedillo)
- SB 1175 – Expansion of Housing for ASD (Sen. Steinberg)
- SB 1531 – Police Officer Training on ASD (Sen. Correa)
- AB 2302 – Expanding Credentials for Teachers to Educate Students with ASD (Asm. Speaker Bass)
- AB 131 – Teacher Credentialing for the Education of Preschool Age Children with ASD (Asm. Beall)
- AB 1872 – State Clearinghouse for the Education of Students with ASD (Asm. Coto)

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**Autism Legislative Package: 2007-2008 Session**

**Overview of Each Bill**

- Identify Problems & Issues
- Policy Background
- Legislative Intent

<http://senweb03.senate.ca.gov/autism>

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**SB 527 – Early Identification of ASD (Sen. Steinberg)**

Problems & Challenges

- Only 57% of children 10-35 months of age ~ developmental screen
- Barriers to effective medical screening included lack of: time (80%); payment (66%); staffing (51%); training (28%)
- Delayed diagnosis in 60-80% of children with developmental disabilities
- Underserved populations face unique barriers
- > 50% of children with ASD are diagnosed after starting school

Policy Recommendations

- Improve communication & case management
- Improve training for health care professionals
- Improve data and information sharing
- Professional development

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**SB 527 – Early Identification of ASD (Sen. Steinberg)**

- This bill establishes a pilot project to promote best practices & coordination among systems of care to improve the appropriate early detection, assessment, intervention and treatment of children with ASD.
- This bill requires the State Department of Developmental Services to partner with at least one regional center to implement a 2-year ASD Early Screening, Intervention, & Treatment Pilot Program in at least 3 key geographic areas.
- This bill, which is supported by First 5California, requires DDS to apply to the California Children and Families Commission for funding.
- DDS shall report the results of the pilot program to the Governor and Legislature by July 1, 2011.

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**SB 1475 –Transitional Services between Regional Centers & School Districts for Early ASD Treatment (Sen. Torlakson)**

Problems & Challenges:

- Transition at 3 years of age is a crisis to many families
- Disruption in continuity of services
- Lack of coordination between regional centers and school districts
- Re-duplication of evaluations and assessments
- School districts often lack resources, infrastructure, & personnel
- Delay in crucial services while regional centers and school districts quarrel over funding sources

Policy Recommendations

- Provide comprehensive, integrated, seamless services
- Functional approach to child development
- Build on existing models of voluntary collaboration between regional centers and school districts
- Effective early intervention is "win-win" for both regional centers & school districts

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**SB 1475 –Transitional Services between Regional Centers & School Districts for Early ASD Treatment (Sen. Torlakson)**

- This bill establishes a 2-year pilot project to provide methods, instruments and systems of care between regional centers and school districts for the early identification and assessment of children with ASD (0-5 years of age.)
- The State Department of Developmental Services (DDS) shall identify and implement existing models of excellence and best practices that promote seamless, coordinated, and integrated programs between regional centers and local school districts
- Voluntary collaboration between regional centers and school districts with availability of funding, resources, and technical assistance.
- DDS shall apply to the California Children and Families Commission for funding.
- DDS shall provide a report and recommendations on this pilot project to the Legislature by June 1, 2012

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**SB 1563 – Health Insurance Coverage (Sen. Perata)**

**Problems & Challenges:**

- California's existing mental health parity law requires coverage for the diagnosis and medically necessary treatment of ASD
- Nevertheless, many children and adults with ASD are not receiving appropriate interventions
- Health plans and insurers are often denying such services as ABA; speech & occupational therapy
- Many health plans and insurers are referring consumers to regional centers and school districts for these interventions

**Policy Recommendations:**

- All health plans should treat ASD as a neurological medical condition & provide the comparable coverage
- Services and interventions must not be excluded based on the diagnosis of ASD
- Medically necessary services for ASD must be more clearly defined & enforced by the Department of Managed Health Care (DMHC) and the Department of Insurance (DOI)

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**SB 1563 – Health Insurance Coverage of ASD (Sen. Perata)**

- The Department of Managed Health Care and the Department of Insurance shall review guidelines and standards on the screening, diagnosis, assessment, and treatment of autism and other pervasive developmental disorders
- The Department of Managed Health Care and the Department of Insurance shall develop recommendations by July 1, 2009, on ensuring that health plans and insurers provide appropriate and equitable coverage for those illnesses
- These recommendations would be consistent with the protections provided under the existing California Mental Parity Law, which specifically identifies ASD and PDD.

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**SB 1175 – Expansion of Housing for ASD (Sen. Steinberg)**

**Problems & Challenges:**

- DDS population (230,000) is growing at an alarming rate:  
>60% in past 10 years
- DDS population is becoming increasingly younger:  
57% <22 years of age
- DDS population with ASD is even younger:  
85% < 22 years of age
- Almost 80% of individuals with ASD are living with family
- In the next 5 years, the “autism bubble” will reach adulthood

**Policy Recommendations:**

- Create new models for housing & support
- Enact a state financing program
- Establish multiple educational pathways & expand programs that work: Taft Community College Model
- Middle school training for students with ASD who require intensive supports and assistance

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**SB 1175 – Expansion of Housing for ASD (Sen. Steinberg)**

- Expands the existing authority that has been granted to the Bay Area Housing Consortium Regional Centers to all regional centers throughout the state
- Authorizes all regional centers to enter into negotiations and contracts with certain specified entities for the payment of lease or leases on housing for regional center clients pursuant to the fulfillment of the following stipulations provided for in this act:
  - That the housing and services are integrated with individuals without disabilities
  - Approval of proposed ownership and management by regional center & DDS
  - Reasonable costs
  - Proposal includes approved transfer of property to non-profit approved by regional center
- Bill calls for review of contracts by California Housing Finance Agency and the Department of Housing and Community Development

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**SB 1531 – Police Officer Training on ASD (Sen. Correa)**

**Problems & Challenges:**

- Large number of youths with ASD
- Atypical social skills; inappropriate behaviors; communication problems
- Individuals with ASD are 7 times more likely to have contact with law enforcement
- Law enforcement response may aggravate problem & situation
- Increased risk to individual with ASD and to law enforcement

**Policy Recommendations:**

- Establish collaboration of ASD groups with Peace Officers Standards & Training Commission (POST)
- Build on existing POST resources
  - Training videos produced in 1995 & in 2005
  - Report to the Legislature on POST training for mental disabled
- Provide improved and ongoing training for law enforcement

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**SB 1531 – Police Officer Training on ASD (Sen. Correa)**

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- The Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training shall create and make available on DVD and electronically a course on how to recognize and interact with people with ASD
- This course shall be developed in consultation with the State Department of Developmental Services and other appropriate agencies and organizations that have expertise in the area of ASD.
- This course shall be designed for, and made available to, peace officers who are first responders.

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**Educational Issues: Preparing Teachers & Other School-Based Personnel to Instruct Students with ASD**

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Problems & Challenges:

- Compelling need to increase the number of well-trained teachers & specialists
- Ensure teacher training & preparation
- Well-trained paraprofessionals & school aides
- Teachers need more resources & supports
- School administrators and principals
- Expanded opportunities for pre-service & in-service training

Policy Recommendations:

- Establish alternative credentialing program
- Establish a multi-disciplinary autism training team approach
- Career ladder opportunities
- Comprehensive and integrated technical assistance and resource centers
- Increase funding to local educational agencies for professional development & training

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**AB 131 – Teacher Credentialing for the Education of Preschool Age Children (Asm. Beall)**

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- There is a consensus among Public and Private schools and the Legislative Blue Ribbon Commission on Autism, that there is a critical shortage of credentialed teachers who are qualified to teach children with autism.
- Neither the current qualified credential (Special Education, Moderate to Severe) or the "Mild to Moderate" credential allows such credentialed teachers to teach children with autism ages 3 & 4.
- Currently, to teach children with autism ages 3 & 4 requires a special education credential "Early Childhood Education".
- AB 131 would allow persons who have a credential that allows them to teach children with autism age 5 and above, to teach children with autism ages 3 & 4 provided they take a 3 unit course in Special Education, Early Childhood Education from a recognized University.

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**AB 2302 – Expanding Credentials for Special Education Teachers to Educate K-12 Students with ASD (Asm. Speaker Bass)**

- Authorizes the holder of a level 1 education specialist credential who is authorized to provide instruction to individuals with mild and moderate disabilities to provide instruction to pupils with ASD provided that have satisfied one of the following requirements
- Provided full-time instruction for at least one year prior to September 1, 2007, in a special education program that serves pupils who are three and four years of age with autism and received a favorable evaluation or recommendation to teach pupils with autism from the LEA or school.
- Completed at least three-semester units of coursework in the subject of special education, early childhood education at a regionally accredited institution of higher education

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**AB 1872 – State Clearinghouse for the Education of students with ASD (Asm. Coto)**

- Establish the California ASD Clearinghouse to provide evidence-based recommendations and practices for the education of pupils with ASD
- Information provided by the Clearinghouse shall be targeted to a broad range of audiences and shall include:
  - Internet web site on evidence-based practices
  - "Toolbox" of resources
  - Demonstration projects
- Establish a Clearinghouse Oversight Committee to represent major stakeholders & to perform the following:
  - Establish criteria, guidelines, and processes
  - Select anchor documents and resources
  - Provide advice and recommendations
  - Develop online rating systems and periodic surveys

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**Status of The California Autism Legislative Package**

**Signed into Law:**

•AB 2303 (Assembly Speaker Karen Bass) that expands the credentials of qualified teachers who are able to instruct K-12 students with ASD

**Passed by the Legislature but Still Require the Governor's Signature:**

- SB 527 (Sen. Darrell Steinberg) to improve the early identification and intervention for young children with ASD
- SB 1175 (Sen. Darrell Steinberg) to expand the housing and independent living opportunities for adults with ASD
- SB 1475 (Sen. Tom Torlakson) to improve the coordination of ASD services and programs between regional centers and school districts for children from birth to five years of age
- SB 1531 (Sen. Lou Correa) to improve the training and knowledge of ASD among law enforcement officers
- SB 1563 (Sen. Don Perata) to provide appropriate and equitable coverage for ASD by private health plans and insurers
- AB 131 (Asm. Jim Beall) to expand the credentials that would qualify teachers to educate preschool students with ASD
- AB 1872 (Asm. Joe Coto) to establish a state clearinghouse for the education of students with ASD.

**Set Aside During Committee Hearings:**

•SB 1364 (Sen. Gil Cedillo) to improve community awareness and outreach efforts on ASD by the California Department of Public Health. Set aside due to lack of funding.

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*“DIGNITY, HOPE,  
OPPORTUNITY AND  
LOVE ARE THE  
BIRTHRIGHTS OF ALL  
CHILDREN”*

*–The Help Group*

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**CA Legislative Blue Ribbon Commission on Autism  
Website:**

<http://senweb03.senate.ca.gov/autism/index.html>

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PART 2 – The Federal Agenda

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**An Overview of Enacted and Pending  
Federal Autism Legislation**

**By John Farrimond**

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Corporate & Public Affairs

The Help Group

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**Enacted Legislation**

**Combating Autism Act (S.843)**

Sponsors:  
Senate Version - Senators Christopher Dodd (D-CT) and Rick Santorum (R-PA)  
House Version – Congresswomen Mary Bono (R-CA) and Diana DeGette (D-CO)

Summary:  
The Combating Autism Act authorized \$920 million in federal funding for biomedical and environmental research, surveillance, awareness and early identification over the five years – increasing federal spending on autism by at least 50%.

- Highlights:
- \$645 over five years to the National Institute of Health (NIH) to expand, intensify and coordinate activities on autism
  - \$69 million over five years to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) to promote autism awareness and research causes
  - \$210 million over five years for the Health Resources and Services Administration to generate improves to autism education, early detection and intervention.

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**Enacted Legislation (cont.)**

Status:  
**S.843 became law on December 19, 2006.**

**"I am proud to sign this bill into law and confident that it will serve as an important foundation for our Nation's efforts to find a cure for autism."**

--President George W. Bush

Sources:  
<http://www.autismvotes.org>  
<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/12/20061219-3.html>

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**Department of Defense Appropriations Bill**

Sponsors:  
Congressional Mandate

Summary:  
Congress and the Department of Defense have recognized autism as a significant issue affecting military families. Autism has been added to the roster of Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs. Their stated mission is to "promote innovative research that advances the understanding of autism spectrum disorder and leads to improved treatment outcomes."

Highlights:  
\$7.5 million in funding in fiscal year 2007  
\$6.4 million in funding in fiscal year 2008

Status:  
\$15 million has been requested for fiscal year 2009

Source:  
<http://cdmp.army.mil/arp/default.htm>

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**Pending Legislation**

**Disability Savings Act of 2008 (S.2741)**

Sponsor:  
Senator Christopher Dodd (D-CT)

Summary:  
The bill would allow for the creation of special saving accounts for disabled individuals or their families to pay for allowable expenses related to their disabling condition. These accounts are similar to 529 accounts for higher education expenses.

- Highlights:
- Distributions from the account for qualified expenses are tax free.
  - Protects proposed savings accounts from affecting means-tested federal programs
  - Creates tax credits for contributions up to \$2000

Status:  
The bill is currently in the Senate Finance Committee

Source:  
<http://dodd.senate.gov/index.php?q=node/4316>  
<http://thomas.loc.gov/>

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**Expanding the Promise for Individuals with Autism Act (EPIAA) (S.937 and H.R. 1881)**

Sponsors:  
Senators Hillary Clinton (D-NY) and Wayne Allard (R-CO)  
Representatives Mike Doyle (D-PA), Christopher Smith (R-NJ), Eliot Engel (D-NY) and Charles Pickering (R-MS)

Summary:  
The bill amends the Public Health Services Act providing additional funds to improve access to comprehensive treatments, interventions, and services for individuals with autism spectrum disorders and their families

- Highlights:
- The bill proposes to
- Convene a Task Force to evaluate evidence-based biomedical and behavioral treatments and services for individuals with autism
  - Establish a multi-year demonstration grant program for states to provide evidence-based autism treatments, interventions, and services
  - Create planning and demonstration grant programs for adults with autism
  - Award grants to states for access to autism services following diagnosis

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**Expanding the Promise for Individuals with Autism Act (EPIAA) (S.937 and H.R. 1881) (Cont.)**

- Award grants to University Centers of Excellence for Developmental Disabilities to provide services and address the unmet needs of individuals with autism and their families
- Make grants to protection and advocacy systems to address the needs of individuals with autism and other emerging populations of individuals with disabilities.
- Award a grant to a national nonprofit organization for the establishment and maintenance of a national technical assistance center for autism services and information dissemination

Status:  
S.937 has been referred to the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pension.  
H.R. 1881 is currently in the House Energy and Commerce Committee.

Sources:  
<http://www.aucd.org/template/page.cfm?id=311>  
(Association of University Centers on Disabilities)  
<http://thomas.loc.gov/>

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**Military Family Autism Equality Act (H.R. 6930)**

**Sponsors:**

Representative Jim Moran (D-VA) and Representative Jeff Miller (R-FL)

**Summary:**

The bill provides retired military families with autistic children the same health care benefit as families of active duty service members with children suffering from autism.

**Highlights:**

Active duty service members with an autistic child have access to a benefit through TRICARE that provides \$2500 a month (a max of \$30,000/year) for Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA). The day an active duty soldier retires from the military their dependents lose access to the ABA health benefit. This benefit changes whether the retirement is voluntary or a forced retirement at the end of their career obligations.

**Status:**

The legislation has been referred to the House Armed Services Committee

**Source:**

[http://moran.house.gov/apps/list/press/va08\\_moran/MilAutism.shtml](http://moran.house.gov/apps/list/press/va08_moran/MilAutism.shtml)  
<http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/thomas>

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**Helping HANDS for Autism Act of 2008 (S. 2950, H.R. 6282)**

**Sponsors:**

Senator Robert Menendez (D-NJ)  
Representative Kay Granger (R-TX)

**Summary:**

Legislation to increase housing, awareness, and navigation demonstration services (HANDS) for individuals with autism spectrum disorders

**Highlights:**

- Creates a grant program to create an autism services "navigator." Navigators assist families in identifying needed and eligible services such as education, housing, and health programs for individuals with autism spectrum disorder.
- Provides for the creation of a standardized curriculum for training first responders (Police, Fire, Ambulance) about interacting with individuals with autism spectrum disorders.
- Creates a HUD task force whose mission is to develop pilot housing grant programs for adults with autism.

**Status:**

S. 2950 referred to the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions  
H.R. 6282 referred to the House Committee on Energy and Commerce and the House Committee on Financial Services

**Source:**

[http://www.washingtonwatch.com/bills/show/110\\_SN\\_2950.html](http://www.washingtonwatch.com/bills/show/110_SN_2950.html)  
<http://menendez.senate.gov/newsroom/record.cfm?id=296848>

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**Mercury Free Vaccines Act of 2007 (H.R. 881)**

**Sponsor:**

Representative Dave Weldon (R-FL)

**Summary:**

The Act proposes to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to reduce human exposure to mercury through vaccines.

**Highlights:**

- Requires that beginning with the 2007/08 flu season, the flu shots for children under age three and pregnant women may not contain more than 1 microgram (mcg) of mercury
- Requires that beginning with the 2008/09 flu season, the flu shots for children under age six and pregnant women may not contain more than 1mcg of mercury
- Requires by July 1, 2008, all other routinely administered childhood vaccines, may not contain more than 1mcg of mercury, and on Jan 1, 2009, all pediatric, adolescent and adult vaccines that contain more than 1mcg of mercury are banned

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**Mercury Free Vaccines Act of 2007 (H.R. 881) (Cont.)**

- Requires mercury-containing vaccines to include: (1) a statement that indicates the presence of mercury in the vaccine; (2) information on the availability of any mercury-free or mercury-reduced alternative vaccine and instructions on how to obtain such an alternative vaccine; and (3) a recommendation against administration of any mercury-containing vaccine to a pregnant woman.
- Expresses the Sense of the Congress that the CDC should incorporate into its vaccine promotion messages, a recommendation against administering a mercury-containing vaccine to pregnant women.

Status:

The bill has been sent to the House Subcommittee on Health

Source:

<http://www.govtrack.us/congress/bill.xpd?bill=h110-881>  
<http://weldon.house.gov/News/DocumentSingle.aspx?DocumentID=57837>  
<http://thomas.loc.gov>

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**IDEA Full Funding Act (S. 1159)**

Sponsors:

Senators Chuck Hagel (R-NE) and Tom Harkin (D-IA)

Summary:

This legislation seeks to amend part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act to provide full Federal funding of part B.

Highlights:

- Over the last 10 years, federal funds for IDEA have not exceeded 19 percent of the authorized level. This leaves state governments and local school districts to pick up the tab for this federally mandated program, taking away funds for other local education needs.
- In Fiscal Year 2007 federal funding for IDEA was \$10.7 billion, or 17.2 percent of the authorized level.
- The Hagel-Harkin bill would fully-fund IDEA in seven years through mandatory annual phased-in spending increases, until federal funding reaches \$30.8 billion in Fiscal Year 2015.

Status:

Referred to Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions

Source:

<http://hagel.senate.gov>  
<http://thomas.loc.gov>

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**Teacher Education for Autism Children Act of 2007 (TEACH) (H.R. 2390)**

Sponsors:

Representatives Mike Doyle (D-PA) and Christopher Smith (R-NJ)

Summary:

A proposed amendment to the tax code to provide a refundable tax credit for education and training expenses relating to autism spectrum disorders with the goal to increase the number of teachers working in the autism field.

Highlights:

- Up to \$10,000 of refundable tax credits for education expenses such as tuition, books & student loan interest.
- Tax credit program would expire in fiscal year 2012

Status:

The bill has been referred to the House Committee on Ways and Means

Source: <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/thomas>

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### Global Autism Assistance Act of 2008 (S.2798, H.R. 5446)

**Sponsors:**

Representative Christopher Smith (R-NJ)  
Senator Norm Coleman (R-MN)

**Summary:**

The Act directs the Administrator for the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to establish and administer a health and education grant program related to autism spectrum disorders.

**Highlights:**

- Grants will be made to support activities by nongovernmental organizations and other service providers, including advocacy groups, focused on autism in developing countries
- Will establish a "teach the teachers" program to train health and education professionals working with autistic children in developing countries.

**Status:**

H.R. 5446 referred to the House Committee on Foreign Affairs  
S. 2798 referred to the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations

**Source:**

<http://thomas.loc.gov>

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### IDEA Fairness Restoration Act (H.R. 4188)

**Sponsors:**

Representative Chris Van Hollen (D-MD)

**Summary:**

To amend the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act to permit a prevailing party in an action or proceeding brought to enforce the Act to be awarded expert witness fees.

**Highlights:**

- Expert witness fees would include reasonable costs for any test or evaluation necessary for the preparation of the parent or guardian's case.

**Status:**

The bill has been referred to the House Committee on Education and Labor

**Source:**

H.R. 4188

<http://thomas.loc.gov>

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### Resources

<http://www.autismvotes.org>

Research status and language of federal legislation

<http://thomas.loc.gov/>

Research individual congressional members and legislation

<http://www.govtrack.us/congress/>

U.S. House of Representative

<http://www.house.gov/>

U. S. Senate

<http://www.senate.gov/>

Autism Caucus Co-Chairs

Rep. Christopher Smith: <http://chrissmith.house.gov/>

Rep. Mike Doyle: <http://www.house.gov/doyle/>

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