



## *Illinois General Assembly*

For Immediate Release:

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### **Area Legislators Call on Democrats to Release Autism Legislation**

*Legislation would mandate the coverage of the diagnosis and treatment of autism spectrum disorders*

**Springfield** ...State Representatives Mike Fortner (R-West Chicago) and Franco Coladipietro (R-Bloomington) today called on Democrats to release legislation which would mandate that insurance companies provide coverage for children with autism. Senate Bill 1900 which unanimously passed the House and Senate was held up on a technicality after the vote.

Fortner noted that ten years ago autism was diagnosed in one out of 10,000 children and considered a rare disorder. Today, autism is diagnosed in one out of 150 children.

“Autism is the fastest-growing developmental disability in this country. Most families can not afford the proper healthcare that caring for a child with autism needs. This is the first step in ensuring that these children have access to the best medical care out there,” said Rep. Mike Fortner.

SB 1900 would add autism disorders to the list of diseases covered under the Illinois Insurance Code. This legislation would mandate that insurance companies cover the diagnosis and treatment of autism spectrum disorders for individuals under the age of 21. Treatment for autism includes psychiatric, psychological and therapeutic care including behavioral speech, occupational and physical therapies. This legislation will allow families to seek coverage of up to \$36,000 per year and has no limit on the number of visits to a physician.

Back in March, State Representatives Franco Coladipietro and Mike Fortner held an autism forum for local parents. At this meeting, parents were given the opportunity to learn about educational opportunities for their children and to share their concerns with the legislators.

“I appreciate the parents who were willing to share their concerns and ideas about helping their children,” said Rep. Coladipietro. “This legislation was initiated because of local parents’ concerns and suggestions on how we could provide better healthcare for these children. I applaud his efforts, and I hope that this will benefit thousands of families that are constantly looking for ways to help their child.”

Rep. Coladipietro noted that Senate Bill 1900 had unanimously passed the House and Senate. However, under new rules proposed by Speaker Madigan all legislation has to include a “JCAR amendment”, and the Senate would not concur to the amendment. These new rules were introduced because of past actions by the Governor ignoring the decision made by the Joint Committee on Administrative Rules (JCAR). JCAR is made up of Democrat and Republican legislators. One purpose of this committee is to ensure that the legislature is adequately informed of how laws are implemented through agency rulemaking.

“This legislation received bipartisan support in the House and the Senate. I think it’s sad and unfortunate that this legislation is being held up because of Democrat dysfunction. The only ones who are hurt by this process are the families which will not be able to receive the help that they need for their children,” said Rep. Coladipietro.

For additional information, feel free to contact Rep. Fortner’s office at (630) 293-9344 or Rep. Coladipietro’s office at (630) 582-0045.

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