

108TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. RES. 317

Recognizing the importance of increasing awareness of autism spectrum disorders, supporting programs for increased research and improved treatment of autism, and improving training and support for individuals with autism and those who care for individuals with autism.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MARCH 10, 2004

Mr. HAGEL submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the
Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

RESOLUTION

Recognizing the importance of increasing awareness of autism spectrum disorders, supporting programs for increased research and improved treatment of autism, and improving training and support for individuals with autism and those who care for individuals with autism.

Whereas the Autism Society of America, Cure Autism Now, the National Alliance for Autism Research, Unlocking Autism, and numerous other organizations commemorate April as National Autism Awareness Month;

Whereas autism is a developmental disorder that is typically diagnosed during the first 3 years of life, robbing individuals of their ability to communicate and interact with others;

Whereas autism affects an estimated 1 in every 250 children in America;

Whereas autism is 4 times more likely in boys than in girls, and can affect anyone, regardless of race, ethnicity, or other factors;

Whereas the cost of specialized treatment in a developmental center for people with autism is approximately \$80,000 per individual per year;

Whereas the cost of special education programs for school-aged children with autism is often more than \$30,000 per individual per year;

Whereas the cost nationally of caring for persons affected by autism is estimated at more than \$90,000,000,000 per year; and

Whereas despite the fact that autism is one of the most common developmental disorders, many professionals in the medical and educational fields are still unaware of the best methods to diagnose and treat the disorder: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2 (1) supports the establishment of April as Na-
3 tional Autism Awareness Month;

4 (2) recognizes and commends the parents and
5 relatives of children with autism for their sacrifice
6 and dedication in providing for the special needs of
7 children with autism and for absorbing significant fi-
8 nancial costs for specialized education and support
9 services;

1 (3) supports the goal of increasing Federal
2 funding for aggressive research to learn the root
3 causes of autism, identify the best methods of early
4 intervention and treatment, expand programs for in-
5 dividuals with autism across their lifespan, and pro-
6 mote understanding of the special needs of people
7 with autism;

8 (4) commends the Department of Health and
9 Human Services for the swift implementation of the
10 Children’s Health Act of 2000, particularly for es-
11 tablishing 4 “Centers of Excellence” at the Centers
12 for Disease Control and Prevention to study the epi-
13 demiology of autism and related disorders and the
14 proposed “Centers of Excellence” at the National
15 Institutes of Health for autism research;

16 (5) stresses the need to begin early intervention
17 services soon after a child has been diagnosed with
18 autism, noting that early intervention strategies are
19 the primary therapeutic options for young people
20 with autism, and early intervention significantly im-
21 proves outcomes for people with autism and can re-
22 duce the level of funding and services needed later
23 in life;

24 (6) supports the Federal Government’s nearly
25 30-year-old commitment to provide States with 40

1 percent of the costs needed to educate children with
2 disabilities under part B of the Individuals with Dis-
3 abilities Education Act (IDEA);

4 (7) recognizes the shortage of appropriately
5 trained teachers who have the skills and support
6 necessary to teach, assist, and respond to special
7 needs students, including those with autism, in our
8 school systems; and

9 (8) recognizes the importance of worker train-
10 ing programs that are tailored to the needs of devel-
11 opmentally disabled persons, including those with
12 autism, and notes that people with autism can be,
13 and are, productive members of the workforce if they
14 are given appropriate support, training, and early
15 intervention services.

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