

110TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

# S. 2950

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

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

APRIL 30, 2008

Mr. MENENDEZ introduced the following bill; which was read twice and  
referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

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## A BILL

To increase housing, awareness, and navigation demonstration  
services (HANDS) for individuals with autism spec-  
trum disorders.

1       *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2       *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3       **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4       This Act may be cited as the “Helping Housing,  
5       Awareness, and Navigation Demonstration Services for  
6       Individuals With Autism Spectrum Disorders Act of  
7       2008” or the “Helping HANDS for Autism Act of 2008”.

# 1      **TITLE I—AUTISM NAVIGATOR** 2                                    **PROGRAM**

## 3    **SEC. 101. AUTISM NAVIGATOR PROGRAM.**

4            Part R of title III of the Public Health Service Act  
 5    (42 U.S.C. 280i et seq.) is amended by inserting after sec-  
 6    tion 399DD the following:

### 7    **“SEC. 399DD–1. AUTISM NAVIGATOR PROGRAM.**

8            “(a) AUTHORIZATION OF GRANT PROGRAM.—

9                    “(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary, in coordina-  
 10            tion with the Secretary of Housing and Urban De-  
 11            velopment and the Secretary of Education, shall es-  
 12            tablish a demonstration grant program to award  
 13            grants to eligible entities to enable such entities to  
 14            develop an autism navigator program to create a  
 15            more efficient, effective, coordinated use of the  
 16            health, housing, education, and social service sys-  
 17            tems for individuals with an autism spectrum dis-  
 18            order.

19                   “(2) ELIGIBLE ENTITY.—

20                            “(A) IN GENERAL.—In this section, the  
 21            term ‘eligible entity’ means an entity that has—

22                                    “(i) not less than 2 years experience  
 23                            serving the autism community in an advo-  
 24                            cacy or service capacity; and

25                                    “(ii) a—

1 “(I) behaviorist with at least a  
 2 master’s degree on staff or in a con-  
 3 sultation capacity who has experience  
 4 in applied behavioral analysis;

5 “(II) Board Certified Behavior  
 6 Analyst on staff;

7 “(III) special educator with  
 8 training in autism spectrum disorders  
 9 on staff;

10 “(IV) rehabilitation professional  
 11 with training in autism spectrum dis-  
 12 orders on staff; or

13 “(V) master’s level professional  
 14 with training in autism spectrum dis-  
 15 orders on staff.

16 “(B) SECRETARY’S DETERMINATION.—  
 17 Notwithstanding subparagraph (A), the Sec-  
 18 retary may determine who qualifies as an eligi-  
 19 ble entity under this section.

20 “(b) APPLICATION FOR A GRANT.—

21 “(1) IN GENERAL.—An eligible entity that de-  
 22 sires a grant under this section shall submit an ap-  
 23 plication to the Secretary at such time, in such man-  
 24 ner and form, and containing such information,

1 agreements, and assurances as the Secretary deter-  
 2 mines to be necessary to carry out this section.

3 “(2) OUTREACH SERVICES.—An application  
 4 submitted under paragraph (1) shall contain an as-  
 5 surance that the applicant will provide ongoing out-  
 6 reach activities while receiving a grant under this  
 7 section, in a manner that is culturally competent for  
 8 the population served, to inform the public and the  
 9 specific community that the autism navigator is  
 10 serving, of the services under the grant.

11 “(c) DEVELOPMENT OF AUTISM NAVIGATOR PRO-  
 12 GRAM.—

13 “(1) AUTISM NAVIGATORS.—

14 “(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall  
 15 determine the functions of autism navigators  
 16 under this section.

17 “(B) TYPES OF FUNCTIONS.—The func-  
 18 tions of an autism navigator under this section  
 19 may include—

20 “(i) with respect to an individual with  
 21 an autism spectrum disorder and such in-  
 22 dividual’s family—

23 “(I) coordinating and scheduling  
 24 appointments and referrals, commu-  
 25 nity outreach, assistance with trans-

1 portation, housing or education ar-  
2 rangements, and assistance with in-  
3 surance issues and other barriers to  
4 care;

5 “(II) case management and psy-  
6 chosocial assessment and care or in-  
7 formation and referral to such serv-  
8 ices;

9 “(III) contact and care coordina-  
10 tion of health care, including psycho-  
11 social assessment and care, and other  
12 community services, provider referrals,  
13 financial support and service coordi-  
14 nation, including transportation, hous-  
15 ing, and education;

16 “(IV) determining coverage  
17 under health insurance and health  
18 plans for all services;

19 “(V) aiding with health insurance  
20 coverage issues; and

21 “(VI) ensuring the initiation,  
22 continuation, or sustained access to  
23 care prescribed by the individual’s  
24 health care providers;

1           “(ii) facilitating partnerships within  
2           the healthcare and advocacy community to  
3           assist outreach to the underserved autism  
4           community;

5           “(iii) notifying individuals and their  
6           families as to autism clinical trials and, on  
7           request, facilitating enrollment of eligible  
8           individuals;

9           “(iv) anticipating, identifying, and  
10          helping individuals with an autism spec-  
11          trum disorder overcome barriers in access-  
12          ing and securing appropriate services in a  
13          timely manner;

14          “(v) coordinating with State depart-  
15          ments responsible for human services, edu-  
16          cation, health and senior services, housing,  
17          community affairs, and labor in providing  
18          services to individuals with an autism spec-  
19          trum disorder and their families;

20          “(vi) identifying caregiver supports  
21          for those caring for individuals with an au-  
22          tism spectrum disorder, including men-  
23          toring, support groups, community re-  
24          sources, and legal consultation;

1 “(vii) identifying, mentoring, and sup-  
2 porting culturally sensitive caregivers of in-  
3 dividuals with an autism spectrum dis-  
4 order; and

5 “(viii) serving as a reliable, expert re-  
6 source for advice, support, and direction to  
7 access early intervention services under  
8 part C of the Individuals with Disabilities  
9 Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1431 et seq.),  
10 health insurance (public or private), hous-  
11 ing programs, financial security programs,  
12 Medicare services under title XVIII of the  
13 Social Security Act, and Medicaid services  
14 under title XIX of the Social Security Act.

15 “(2) DEVELOPMENT OF PROGRAM.—

16 “(A) IN GENERAL.—An eligible entity that  
17 receives a grant under this section shall develop  
18 an autism navigator program that will recruit,  
19 employ, train, assign, and supervise autism  
20 navigators.

21 “(B) DURATION OF GRANTS.—A grant  
22 provided under this section shall be—

23 “(i) for a period of not more than 5  
24 years; and

1 “(ii) subject to annual approval by the  
2 Secretary and subject to the availability of  
3 appropriations for the fiscal year involved.

4 “(C) NO LIMITATION ON NUMBER OF  
5 GRANTS.—Nothing in this paragraph shall be  
6 construed to limit the number of grants that  
7 may be made to an eligible entity.

8 “(3) OUTREACH.—An autism navigator pro-  
9 gram developed under paragraph (2) shall reach out  
10 to appropriate doctor’s offices and treatment centers  
11 to encourage such doctors and centers to refer indi-  
12 viduals with an autism spectrum disorder to such  
13 program, which will offer autism navigation services  
14 described in this subsection.

15 “(4) TRAINING AND PREPARATION.—An autism  
16 navigator program developed under paragraph (2)  
17 shall train and prepare autism navigators as follows:

18 “(A) Autism navigators shall have direct  
19 knowledge of the communities they serve and  
20 provide services to such communities in a cul-  
21 turally competent manner.

22 “(B) Autism navigators shall be informed  
23 about health insurance systems and other com-  
24 munity services, and be able to aid individuals  
25 in resolving access issues.



1           “(C) Autism navigators shall have direct  
2           knowledge of the unique needs of individuals  
3           with an autism spectrum disorder and the cur-  
4           rent evidence-based practices that are available  
5           to such individuals through Federal programs  
6           and in the State.

7           “(5) MANAGING CARE.—An autism navigator  
8           program developed under paragraph (2) shall assign  
9           autism navigators, in accordance with applicable cri-  
10          teria of the Secretary, for—

11           “(A) managing the care of individuals with  
12           an autism spectrum disorder; and

13           “(B) assisting such individuals and fami-  
14           lies with navigating the life service continuum.

15          “(6) CENTRALIZED ACCESS.—An autism navi-  
16          gator program developed under paragraph (2) shall  
17          provide centralized access for individuals with an au-  
18          tism spectrum disorder to multiple Federal and  
19          State activities and programs related to autism spec-  
20          trum disorders, including such activities and pro-  
21          grams carried out by—

22           “(A) the Administration for Children and  
23           Families;

24           “(B) the Centers for Disease Control and  
25           Prevention;

1           “(C) the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid  
2           Services;

3           “(D) the Collaborative Programs of Excel-  
4           lence in Autism;

5           “(E) the Department of Health and  
6           Human Services;

7           “(F) the Health Resources and Services  
8           Administration;

9           “(G) the Interagency Autism Coordinating  
10          Committee;

11          “(H) the National Institutes of Health;

12          “(I) the National Institute of Mental  
13          Health;

14          “(J) the Studies to Advance Autism Re-  
15          search and Treatment;

16          “(K) the Department of Housing and  
17          Urban Development;

18          “(L) the Department of Education; and

19          “(M) the Department of Labor.

20          “(7) DATA COLLECTION AND REPORT.—

21          “(A) IN GENERAL.—Each recipient of a  
22          grant under this section shall—

23                 “(i) collect specific autism data that  
24                 records navigation services provided to

1 each individual served by the autism navi-  
2 gator program; and

3 “(ii) establish and implement proce-  
4 dures and protocols, consistent with appli-  
5 cable Federal and State laws, to ensure the  
6 confidentiality of all information shared by  
7 a participant in the program, the partici-  
8 pant’s personal representative, and the  
9 participant’s health care providers, group  
10 health plans, or health insurance insurers.

11 “(B) DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION.—A  
12 recipient of a grant under this section may,  
13 consistent with applicable Federal and State  
14 confidentiality laws, collect, use, or disclose ag-  
15 gregate information that is not individually  
16 identifiable.

17 “(C) REPORT.—Each recipient of a grant  
18 under this section shall submit an annual report  
19 to the Secretary that—

20 “(i) summarizes and analyzes the  
21 data collected under subparagraph (A)(i);  
22 and

23 “(ii) provides information on needs for  
24 navigation services, types of access difficul-  
25 ties resolved, sources of repeated resolu-

1                   tion, and flaws in the system of access, in-  
 2                   cluding insurance barriers.

3           “(d) EVALUATIONS.—The Secretary shall provide, di-  
 4 rectly or through grants or contracts, for evaluations to  
 5 determine the effects of the services of autism navigators.

6           “(e) COORDINATION WITH OTHER PROGRAMS.—The  
 7 Secretary shall coordinate the demonstration grant pro-  
 8 gram authorized under this section with programs author-  
 9 ized under the Children’s Health Act of 2000 (Public Law  
 10 106–310), the Combating Autism Act of 2006 (Public  
 11 Law 109–416), the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C.  
 12 701 et seq.), the Medicaid home- and community-based  
 13 service waivers program under section 1915(c) of the So-  
 14 cial Security Act, title XIX of the Social Security Act, and  
 15 other appropriate programs.

16           “(f) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this sec-  
 17 tion shall be construed to require payment for navigation  
 18 services or to require payment for other services in cases  
 19 where such other services are provided free of charge.”.

## 20   **TITLE II—AUTISM AWARENESS**

### 21   **SEC. 201. TRAINING OF FIRST RESPONDERS IN THE REC-** 22                   **OGNITION OF AUTISM.**

23           (a) DEVELOPMENT OF CURRICULUM.—The Sec-  
 24 retary of Health and Human Services, in coordination  
 25 with the Director of the Centers for Disease Control and

1 Prevention and in consultation with the heads of other ap-  
 2 propriate Federal agencies, shall develop, demonstrate,  
 3 and disseminate a standard curriculum for the training  
 4 of first responders in assisting individuals (and their fami-  
 5 lies) with autism and other cognitive behavioral disabilities  
 6 during potential and actual emergencies.

7 (b) TRAINING GRANTS.—The Secretary of Health  
 8 and Human Services, in coordination with the Director of  
 9 the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and in  
 10 consultation with the heads of other appropriate Federal  
 11 agencies, shall award grants to States and local govern-  
 12 ments to train first responders (including the police, fire  
 13 departments, emergency medical technicians, and other  
 14 paid or volunteer first responders) in providing assistance  
 15 to individuals with autism and other cognitive impair-  
 16 ments in potential and actual emergency situations.

17 (c) REQUIREMENT.—Training carried out under this  
 18 section shall inform first responders of the risks associated  
 19 with autism and other cognitive behavioral disabilities, as  
 20 well as provide instruction in appropriate autism recogni-  
 21 tion and response techniques.

## 22 **TITLE III—HOME OF THEIR OWN**

### 23 **SEC. 301. HOME OF THEIR OWN.**

24 (a) TASK FORCE.—Not later than 90 days after the  
 25 date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Housing

1 and Urban Development shall convene a task force com-  
2 prised of appropriate national and State autism advocacy  
3 groups, recipients of funds from the Department of Hous-  
4 ing and Urban Development for housing for adults with  
5 an autism spectrum disorder, and community-based orga-  
6 nizations that serve adults with an autism spectrum dis-  
7 order.

8 (b) ESTABLISHMENT OF GRANT PROGRAM.—The  
9 task force described in subsection (a) shall establish a  
10 housing demonstration grant program to award grants to  
11 entities (including States, localities, public and private  
12 partnerships, and community nonprofit and for-profit or-  
13 ganizations) to enable such entities to provide a housing  
14 program for adults with an autism spectrum disorder,  
15 with the goal of providing individualized housing and serv-  
16 ices to such adults.

○