

112TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

# S. RES. 413

Supporting the designation of April 2012 as National Autism Awareness Month.

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MARCH 29, 2012

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

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## RESOLUTION

Supporting the designation of April 2012 as National Autism Awareness Month.

Whereas autism is a general term used to describe a group of complex developmental brain disorders known as pervasive developmental disorders, commonly known as autism spectrum disorders;

Whereas autism is a neurodevelopmental disorder that results in difficulties with communication and social interaction, as well as repetitive behaviors;

Whereas autism affects individuals differently, mildly affecting some and significantly disabling others;

Whereas according to a 2012 report published by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, as of 2008, autism affects an estimated 1 in every 88 children in the United

States, including 1 in 54 boys, which is a 23-percent increase from 2006;

Whereas autism is 4 times more likely to be diagnosed in boys than in girls;

Whereas autism can affect anyone regardless of race, ethnicity, or other factors;

Whereas the lifetime incremental cost of caring for a person with autism is \$3,200,000;

Whereas the cost nationally of caring for persons affected by autism is estimated to be at least \$90,000,000,000 per year;

Whereas the number of autistic adults grows daily and, absent fundamental breakthroughs, will continue to increase in the years and decades ahead;

Whereas it is both a moral and fiscal imperative that services be made available that maximize the potential of each unique adult living with autism to contribute to the greatest extent possible to the society and economy of the United States;

Whereas it is well established that early intervention can improve outcomes by significantly improving the cognitive, language, and adaptive skills of people with autism;

Whereas the promise of early intervention is not being realized as close to 80 percent of adults with autism, even those without an intellectual disability, are unemployed and living at home with relatives rather than independently;

Whereas a variety of physical, medical, and mental-health issues may accompany autism, resulting in marked functional impairment in all activities of daily living;

Whereas these conditions may include epilepsy, Down syndrome, fragile X syndrome, gastrointestinal problems, immune-system disorders, sleep disturbance, sensory integration dysfunction, and metabolic disorders;

Whereas many individuals on the autism spectrum face co-occurring mental-health challenges, including anxiety, obsessive compulsions, and depression;

Whereas individuals living with autism are highly valued and deserve the highest level of dignity and acceptance by society; and

Whereas April 2012 would be an appropriate month to designate as National Autism Awareness Month to increase public awareness of the need to support individuals with autism and the family members and medical professionals who care for individuals with autism: Now, therefore, be it

1       *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2               (1) expresses support designating April 2012 as  
3       National Autism Awareness Month;

4               (2) recognizes and commends both individuals  
5       living with autism and the parents and relatives of  
6       those individuals for the sacrifice and dedication in  
7       providing for the special needs of autistic individuals  
8       and for absorbing financial costs for specialized education,  
9       medical clinical interventions, and support  
10      services;

11              (3) recognizes that—

1 (A) autism is a major public health crisis  
 2 that is taking an enormous toll on millions of  
 3 families who need answers that can come only  
 4 through further research;

5 (B) meeting the education, employment,  
 6 and service-provision needs of individuals on the  
 7 autism spectrum is a clear and compelling pub-  
 8 lic policy issue that requires a rapid national re-  
 9 sponse; and

10 (C) individuals and families are desperate  
 11 to access services that are, at this point, inad-  
 12 equate to meet the current and growing needs  
 13 of individuals with autism;

14 (4) stresses the need to begin early intervention  
 15 services soon after a child has been diagnosed with  
 16 autism, noting that there is a strong consensus that  
 17 intensive treatment as soon as possible following di-  
 18 agnosis can significantly improve cognitive func-  
 19 tioning, language, and adaptive behavior, reduce the  
 20 cost of lifetime care, and yield the most positive life  
 21 outcomes for children with autism;

22 (5) recognizes—

23 (A) the importance of assistance in the  
 24 areas of comprehensive early intervention,  
 25 health, recreation, job training, employment,

1           housing, transportation, and early, primary,  
2           and secondary education; and

3           (B) that with access to, and assistance  
4           with, this type of service and support, individ-  
5           uals with autism can live rich, full, and produc-  
6           tive lives;

7           (6) recognizes that services for transitioning  
8           youth and adults with autism are an especially  
9           pressing need, as are services that enhance the safe-  
10          ty of individuals with autism of any age; and

11          (7) recognizes that by providing adequate serv-  
12          ice and support at crucial points in life, adults with  
13          autism can become tax-paying citizens with produc-  
14          tive and rewarding lives.

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