



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Andrea Stewart-Cousins

Fighting To Ensure Children With Autism Receive The Medical Care They Deserve, Senate Passes Landmark Autism Legislation

ANDREA STEWART-COUSINS June 10, 2010

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PROTECTING CHILDREN WITH AUTISM



The Senate Democratic Majority passed groundbreaking legislation to protect children with autism, setting the bar for a new national standard for treatment and services. The legislation (S7000B/Breslin) requires early intervention screening, diagnosis and treatment for autism spectrum disorders, saving families facing autism thousands of dollars a year.

Despite research demonstrating that early intervention and intensive behavioral therapies can yield significant improvement in the quality of life for those with autism, diagnosis and treatment have been excluded from coverage by health insurance carriers in New York.

The prior insurance law did not provide clarity to consumers or insurers as to the scope of the required coverage. This bill includes an updated definition of autism spectrum disorder, and tells insurers what must be covered. The Commissioner of Health would be responsible for publicizing regulations identifying treatment and therapy options for autism coverage.

Twenty states previously spoke up for those affected by autism by passing legislation to provide them with insurance coverage. The passage of this much needed legislation would make New York the 21st state to require such coverage. This bill is one of the strongest in the nation, not only requiring policies to cover autism, but does so without a financial cap. Furthermore, the coverage is extended for the entire life span of the individual.

The bill would only allow evidence-based and clinically proven treatments to be covered.

Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins (D-Westchester) said, “For years, due to vague State requirements, the people across State of New York have not been able to receive full or even partial coverage for autism spectrum disorder. I am pleased to stand with my colleagues in support of legislation that both clarifies the required scope of coverage to consumers and insurers, and will allow individuals with autism to receive coverage they deserve for the screening, diagnosis and treatment of this disorder. As a result, these New Yorkers will no longer be forced to choose between an impossible financial burden and the proper health care for a family member.”

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