



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

John J. Bonacic

## Senator Bonacic: Landmark Autism Insurance Reform Legislation Passed by Senate

JOHN J. BONACIC June 17, 2011

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### **Bonacic co-sponsored Legislation Would Ensure that Screening, Diagnosis, & Treatment of Autism Spectrum Disorders are Covered by Insurance**

Legislation co-sponsored by State Senator John Bonacic (R/C/I – Mt. Hope) would enable individuals with autism to receive insurance coverage for the screening, diagnosis and treatment of autism spectrum disorders passed the Senate today.

The legislation (S4005A/A6305A); sponsored by Senator Charles Fuschillo (R-Merrick) would relieve families dealing with autism from being forced to spend tens of thousands of dollars out of pocket every year because of their insurance companies refusal to cover costs for autism treatment and therapies.

“I applaud Senator Fuschillo and my Senate colleagues for passing this legislation and giving relief to families who are not only suffering with autism, but with the astronomical costs associated with the diagnosis and treatment of this disorder,” said Senator Bonacic.

The bill would require insurance companies to provide coverage for the screening, diagnosis and treatment of autism spectrum disorders, including behavioral health treatments, speech therapy, occupational therapy and physical therapy. Insurance companies would be prohibited from terminating coverage or refusing to renew, adjust, amend, issue or execute a policy solely because the individual has been diagnosed or received treatment for autism spectrum disorders.

The legislation builds upon an existing law, authored by Senator Fuschillo, which prevents insurance companies from denying treatment coverage otherwise covered by the policy solely because the treatment is provided to diagnose or treat an autism spectrum disorder.

If this legislation becomes law, New York would join twenty-five other states which have already enacted similar autism insurance reform laws.

The legislation has also been approved by the Assembly and will be sent to Governor Cuomo for consideration.

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