



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Martin J. Golden

Senator Golden Joins Senate Colleagues in Voting to Approve Landmark Autism Insurance Reform

MARTIN J. GOLDEN June 20, 2011

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Albany- State Senator Martin J. Golden (R-C-I, Brooklyn) on Friday joined his colleagues in the New York State Senate in approving legislation S. 4005A, which he co-sponsored, to enable individuals with autism spectrum disorders to receive insurance coverage for screening, diagnosis and treatment. The bill would save tens of thousands of dollars in out-of-pocket expenses spent by families caring for individuals with autism and address insurance companies' refusal to cover costs for autism treatments and therapies.

Autism Spectrum Disorders affect individuals of all ethnic, racial, and socioeconomic groups. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) estimates that 1 in 110 children, including 1 in 70 boys, are currently affected with autism.

The legislation requires 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 with or received treatment for autism spectrum disorders.

“Families that need help paying medical bills for their loved ones can finally get the coverage they deserve. This is a giant step forward towards helping families with autism get the care they need,” said Senator Marty Golden. “It’s long past time to give these families access to treatment coverage just like any other condition, and ensure that they are not denied services solely because of an autism diagnosis. That’s exactly what this legislation would do.”

The legislation builds upon an existing law, authored by Senator Charles Fuschillo (R-Merrick), 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 25 other states which have already enacted similar autism insurance reform laws. It is supported by a number of different organizations, including Autism Speaks, the Medical Society of the State of New York, New York State Association for Behavior Analysis, and Families Together in New York State.

The bill will be sent to the Governor.