

FILED APR 3 2001

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 33

BY HORN

A Resolution urging the Iowa Department of Public Health to compile and maintain records regarding autism.

WHEREAS, autism is a brain disorder that typically affects a person's ability to communicate, form relationships with others, and respond appropriately to the environment; and

WHEREAS, some people with autism are relatively high-functioning, with speech and intelligence intact, and others are mentally retarded, mute, or have serious language delays; some seem closed off and shut down; and others seem locked into repetitive behaviors and rigid patterns of thinking; and

WHEREAS, the diagnosis of autism is made when a specified number of characteristics listed in the DSM-IV, a diagnostic tool, are present, in ranges inappropriate for the child's age; and diagnosis usually occurs between the ages three and five; and

WHEREAS, there are other developmental disabilities which are greatly similar to autism, including, among others, Rett's Disorder, Childhood Disintegrative Disorder, Asperger's Disorder, and Pervasive Developmental Disorder Not Otherwise Specified, each of which creates different emotional, learning, and functional difficulties; and

WHEREAS, while there are no known specific causes of these mental disorders, some research suggests that causes might include physical problems affecting those parts of the brain that process language and

SR 33

RULES & ADMINISTRATION

1 information received through the senses, imbalances of
2 certain chemicals in the brain, and genetic factors;
3 autism may also result from a combination of several
4 causes, but factors in the psychological environment
5 of the child do not cause autism; and

6 WHEREAS, autism and associated disorders affect as
7 many as one in 500 individuals, according to the
8 United States Centers for Disease Control and
9 Prevention as of 1997; autism is four times more
10 prevalent in boys than girls and knows no racial,
11 ethnic, or social boundaries, and family income,
12 lifestyle, and educational levels do not affect the
13 chance of autism's occurrence; and

14 WHEREAS, the autism prognosis is startlingly grim
15 and consistent across a broad range of studies, as
16 only about 2 percent of those persons diagnosed with
17 autism will attain normal functioning, with perhaps 40
18 percent of the persons diagnosed being labeled high-
19 functioning autistic, and persons diagnosed often have
20 other medical problems also, such as epilepsy, mental
21 retardation, Down's Syndrome, or genetic disorders
22 such as Fragile X Syndrome, Landau-Kleffner Syndrome,
23 William's Syndrome, or Tourette's Syndrome; and

24 WHEREAS, caring for and educating children and
25 adults suffering from autism and related disorders
26 often require a considerable dedication of emotional
27 and financial resources by parents, caretakers,
28 schools, hospitals, and care facilities; and

29 WHEREAS, the bipartisan Congressional Coalition for
30 Autism Research and Education (C.A.R.E.) has been

1 formed, with 94 members of the United States House of
2 Representatives as members of the coalition, with the
3 goal of increasing autism awareness, educating
4 lawmakers and policymakers, providing a forum wherein
5 autism issues can be debated and discussed, and
6 expanding federal research into autism spectrum
7 disorders; and

8 WHEREAS, to ensure that planning for the welfare
9 and development of persons with autism and related
10 disorders is more meaningful, need exists for the Iowa
11 Department of Public Health to collect data on the
12 size of the autistic population in Iowa and of various
13 types of disabilities affecting that population; and

14 WHEREAS, the Iowa Department of Public Health's
15 Bureau of Vital Statistics has the ability to collect
16 information from pediatricians, family physicians and
17 other health care professionals, school districts, or
18 other care providers, regarding the number of adults
19 and the number of children who have autism or related
20 disorders, and the geographical locations of those
21 persons; NOW THEREFORE,

22 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE, That the Iowa
23 Department of Public Health shall develop legislative
24 recommendations and administrative rules for the
25 compilation of information and statistics related to
26 Iowa residents who have been diagnosed with autism or
27 a related disorder.

28 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the members of Iowa's
29 congressional delegation to the United States House of
30 Representatives are encouraged to become a part of the

SR 33

1 Coalition for Autism Research and Education.

2 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That upon adoption, the
3 Secretary of the Senate shall send a copy of this
4 Resolution to Representatives Leonard L. Boswell, Greg
5 Ganske, Tom Latham, Jim Leach, and Jim Nussle.

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

26

27

28

29

30