



# NEWS

From the Illinois Senate

*State Senator Dave Koehler*

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## **Koehler co - sponsored bill passes in Illinois Senate to increase funding in Illinois for diagnosis and treatment of autism spectrum disorders**

**SPRINGFIELD** – State Senator Dave Koehler (D-Peoria) is among many legislators from both sides of the political spectrum voicing their support for a bill to increase funding for the diagnosis and treatment of autism spectrum disorders in Illinois. The bill provides a maximum benefit of \$36,000 per year for patients diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder.

“I have, in my career as a legislator and community activist, worked to help families affected by autism. It is a mysterious disorder that strikes numerous households and by providing the care needed, we are hoping to unlock the key to autism and hopefully give these families the resources necessary to live full, productive lives,” Senator Koehler said.

Autism is a complex neurobiological disorder impacting an individual’s ability to communicate, socialize and relate to their environment. Autism is considered the most widely diagnosed developmental disability in the nation, affecting 1 in 166 children – a ten-fold increase over the past 20 years. Research shows that autism is more common than the sum of all childhood cancers, muscular dystrophy, juvenile diabetes and cystic fibrosis combined.

Each day, 66 children are diagnosed with autism – an estimated 3 per hour. It has been highly documented that when children with autism secure the appropriate services and treatments early in life, they are able to make extraordinary strides in their lives. Such services are frequently accessible to persons with traumatic brain injury or other neurological conditions, but individuals with autism are routinely denied the very identical services.

Treatment for autism spectrum disorders include psychiatric care, including diagnostic services, psychological assessments and treatments, rehabilitative treatments and therapeutic care, including speech, occupational, and physical therapy.

“Research shows that by providing treatment early, children with autism have a better chance of making it in the world than they would without treatment. By passing this legislation, we are taking a first step in allowing families affected by autism the opportunity to give their children a chance in the world,” Senator Koehler said.

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