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ASSEMBLY TO TAKE UP AUTISM LEGISLATION
Majority Leader Nelson: Bill Will Bring About Real Change for Wisconsin Families

GREEN BAY – Area legislators joined together on February 3rd to announce the introduction of legislation requiring insurance companies to cover treatment for individuals diagnosed with autism. Similar legislation passed with bipartisan support in the Senate in 2008, but stalled in the Assembly after Republican leadership refused to take up the bill.

“This is not a partisan issue,” said Majority Leader Thomas Nelson (D-Kaukauna). “This is a health issue, and a quality of life issue. It’s about helping kids live the happiest and healthiest lives possible, and it’s about time we pass this legislation in Wisconsin.”

While autism was once thought to be untreatable, recent research has revealed the effectiveness of early intervention. Intensive in-home treatment can help up to 50% of children become indistinguishable from their peers by the time they are school-aged, if they are treated as infants and toddlers. Many need no special education or support services when they enter school. Children who make more moderate progress still acquire critical skills that allow them to make friends, attend school and live safely in their communities.

“The Assembly Democrats have moved swiftly to pass legislation that brings about real change for Wisconsin families. With bipartisan support, we approved several measures last week that will create jobs, grow our economy and ensure that out-of-work Wisconsinites have the means to provide for their families during these difficult economic times. This autism legislation is another effort to bring about real progress on the issues that matter most to Wisconsin.”

Assembly Bill 15 will be taken up in the Assembly Committee on Insurance, which will hold hearings at which members of the public may voice their support for the bill. After passage by the Committee on Insurance, the full Assembly will vote on the measure.

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