



Blue Ribbon Panel on Autism Set for First in Series of Statewide Meetings

JEFFERSON CITY — Sen. Scott T. Rupp, R-Wentzville, has announced that the new, Blue Ribbon Panel on Autism will gather in a series of five meetings this summer to take place across the state. Sen. Rupp is the chair of the 16-member committee consisting of lawmakers, parents, doctors, and health officials that is charged with determining the state of autism in Missouri. Panel members will look at services, teaching, training, and research and then make recommendations for improving the quality of life for those with autism and their families.

“More children in this country are diagnosed with autism than with AIDS, juvenile diabetes, and cancer combined,” said Sen. Rupp. “We need to find solutions now that address the dramatically increasing concerns for families, service providers, and policy-makers.”

The first meeting of the Blue Ribbon Panel on Autism will be held at the State Capitol in the Senate Lounge on Friday, June 29th from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. This gathering will organize the group, and there will be testimony from experts in the field as well as opportunities for the public to testify. Contact Sen. Rupp’s office at (573) 751-1282 to schedule time for testimony.

The rest of the meetings will give more opportunities for public testimony and are tentatively scheduled for various locations throughout the state (specific times and locations are TBD):

July 20 – Cape Girardeau

August 10 – Springfield

August 31 – St. Louis

September 21 – Kansas City

After completing the meetings, the panel will issue a report to the Senate President Pro Tem Michael Gibbons by October 31st, 2007.

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