



## **Blue Ribbon Panel on Autism Holds First Meeting This Week**

JEFFERSON CITY — Sen. Scott T. Rupp, R-Wentzville, will hold the first Blue Ribbon Panel on Autism this Friday, June 29th from 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. in the Senate Lounge at the State Capitol in Jefferson City. This is just the first in a series of five meetings to take place across the state this interim. 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.

“Autism strikes more children in this country than AIDS, juvenile diabetes, and cancer combined,” said Sen. Rupp. “We cannot delay in finding solutions for the dramatic increase in concerns for families, service providers, and policy-makers.”

This first meeting of the Blue Ribbon Panel on Autism will be spent organizing the group, as well as hearing testimony from experts in the fields of family impacts of autism, understanding the autism spectrum disorder, and treatment options. There will also be opportunities for the general public to offer their comments. Contact Sen. Rupp’s office at (573) 751-1282 to schedule a time.

Future meetings 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 Senate President Pro Tem Michael Gibbons by October 31<sup>st</sup>, 2007.

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