



Office of
Jason Crowell State Senator
The Crowell Connection

Senator Jason Crowell – Serving Bollinger, Cape Girardeau, Madison, Mississippi, Perry, and Scott Counties.

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Autism Funding for Missouri An Invaluable Investment

Autism is a series of developmental disorders of the central nervous system that result in potentially debilitating social and communication problems. This disorder, which affects more than 32,000 Missourians, is reaching epidemic levels. According to the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention, 1 out of every 166 births shows signs of an autism spectrum disorder (ASD).

To help families with autistic children, in this year's State Budget Governor Blunt has recommended nearly \$4 million to go toward diagnosing autism and improving treatment for the disorder. A portion of this money will directly help autism programs in Southeast Missouri. The Tailor Institute in Cape Girardeau is one such nonprofit organization that stands to benefit from this funding.



Taylor Crowe, who inspired his father to found the Tailor Institute, now attends the California

For many with autism, living an independent life is a challenge that often leaves them homebound or in an institution. But recent studies indicate that with early intervention, thousands of individuals with high-functioning autism can be given the chance to live independently and be gainfully employed, but only if their gifts and capabilities are identified and fostered. The Tailor Institute's mission is to do just that.

The organization strives to build on the giftedness of individuals who have high-functioning autism so they can realize their dreams of living and working independently. For example, a young man who can memorize entire books would be matched with an employer who would benefit from this ability, such as a company with a need for research or data collection. The Tailor Institute would then provide support for both the employee and employer with the goal of achieving long-term employment.

Last year, I was proud to announce that the Missouri Department of Economic Development had awarded the Tailor Institute with a \$200,000 grant for autism research. Through this research, a model is being developed that identifies and evaluates the potential exhibited by specific individuals with autism, allowing for employment opportunities that have never been previously explored.

The more we as a state invest in early diagnosis and intervention of autism, the less money we will spend in the long run because fewer individuals become dependent on the state. The cost of lifelong care for a person on the autism spectrum can be reduced by two thirds with early diagnosis and intervention.



Supporters of the Tailor Institute in Cape Girardeau visit Senator Crowell in Jefferson City.

But even more important than saving taxpayers money, adequately funding autism research projects and treatment improves the lives of Missouri families. That sort of benefit is priceless, which is why I am a strong advocate of securing state funding for these efforts. The Tailor Institute and other advocates of autism research projects deserve our promise to support them so that their own commitment to Missouri families can be fulfilled.

Contact Me

As always, I appreciate hearing your comments, opinions and concerns. Please feel free to contact me in Jefferson City at (573) 751-2459. You may write to me at Jason Crowell; Missouri Senate; State Capitol; Jefferson City, MO 65101, or email me at: jcrowell@senate.mo.gov or visit me on the web at <http://www.jasoncrowell.com>.

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