



Office of  
**Jason Crowell** State Senator  
The Crowell Connection

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

[Website](#) | [Contact Me](#) | [Biography](#) | [Newsroom](#)

## *Autism Awareness Month* Reflecting on the Impact of Autism

There are more than 32,000 Missourians who have been diagnosed with autism, and there is much we can do to help the growing number of children who are impacted. The month of April is Autism Awareness month, a time to increase understanding and discuss treatment of this disorder.



Autism has no definite cause or cure, but research has found that it is a series of developmental disorders of the central nervous system that result in potentially debilitating social and communication problems. There are different degrees of autism on the spectrum ranging from mild to severe. Symptoms include repetitive behaviors, sleeping or eating problems, self injury, and reliance on routines.

Autism can be diagnosed early in childhood as soon as parents notice unusual behaviors. If a child is screened and found to be autistic, therapy can begin to increase function and help parents to better understand the hurdles of autism. The results are amazing, allowing children to better function as they grow and attain a better quality of life overall.

The state's budget, which will soon come to debate in the Senate, contains nearly \$4 million for autism research and treatment. Southeast Missouri programs will directly benefit from these funds. This will make it possible for treatment in the area to grow, expand, and reach more people in need.

The Tailor Institute is one organization that would benefit from the state budget's funding. The institute is a nonprofit in Cape Girardeau that does invaluable research and provides services for those with autism in Southeast Missouri. Their goal is to work with those who have been diagnosed with autism on the high functioning spectrum, allowing them to reach their full potential. Living independently and obtaining employment are just some of the goals that can be achieved through the Tailor Institute's work. 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. With those funds, the institute is making great strides in the field of autism and their goals are both attainable due to their tireless dedication.

Another opportunity for Southeast Missouri is created through the Lewis and Clark Discovery Initiative Projects. Under this plan, funds for a variety of statewide projects would be made available by the partial sale of the state loan authority's assets. The Lewis and Clark funding will provide \$2.638 million for a new autism center at Southeast Missouri State University.



**Supporters of the Tailor Institute in Cape Girardeau  
Visit with Senator Crowell in Jefferson City.**

This center would provide diagnosis, treatment, education, and research in autism for patients in Southeast Missouri. Construction of the facility is planned in Fall of 2007 and completion is planned for Summer of 2008.

According to the Center of Disease Control and Prevention, 1 out of every 166 births shows signs of an autism spectrum disorder. This month, I ask the people of the 27th District to take time to reflect on the Missouri families who spend every day dealing with this disorder and to do your best to contribute to the identification, research, and treatment of autism.

**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](mailto:jcrowell@senate.mo.gov) or visit me on the web at <http://www.jasoncrowell.com>.

#### Contact Information

**Capitol Office**  
State Capitol Building  
Room 323  
Jefferson City, MO 65101

**Website:**  
<http://www.senate.mo.gov/crowell>

**Phone Number:**  
573.751.2459  
**Fax:**  
573.522.9289