



MISSOURI SENATE

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For Immediate Release:
Sept. 12, 2008

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Senator Jeff Smith Named to State Commission on Autism Spectrum Disorders

Jefferson City — Sen. Jeff Smith, D-St. Louis, was recently appointed by Senate Minority Leader Maida Coleman, D-St. Louis, to serve on the newly formed Missouri Commission on Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD).

The statewide commission, a component of legislation ([Senate Bill 768](#)) passed by the General Assembly this year to enhance autism services in Missouri, will advise and make recommendations to the governor, General Assembly, and state agencies on matters relating to ASD. The commission will also develop a statewide comprehensive plan for an integrated system of training, treatment and services for individuals living with autism.

The commission was the result of recommendations made by a Blue Ribbon Panel on Autism formed by the state Legislature last year.

“I commend the General Assembly for establishing the commission and thank Senator Jeff Smith for agreeing to serve on this important commission,” Sen. Coleman said. “Senator Smith is a passionate legislator who will work tirelessly to provide a better system for individuals and their families affected by Autism Spectrum Disorders.”

The commission, which consists of representatives of the General Assembly, various state agencies, organizations involved with autism, parents, and individuals with ASD, will announce its preliminary recommendations by July 1, 2009.

[Senate Bill 768](#) also establishes the Office of Autism Services within the Department of Mental Health. The office will provide leadership in program development for children and adults with ASD, and

serve as an entry point to help direct families to diagnosis and care services, making it easier for them to navigate the system and more quickly find the resources they need.

“I am very pleased to serve on the autism commission and look forward to working to ensure Missourians have access to the best diagnosis, treatment and support resources available for improving the quality of life of those affected by Autism Spectrum Disorders,” Sen. Smith said.

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