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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Senators Scott T. Rupp & Eric Schmitt
Guest Speakers at Autism Insurance Reform Rallies
Senators to Address Hundreds in
St. Louis, St. Joseph, Kansas City & Springfield

JEFFERSON CITY — Senator Scott T. Rupp, R-St. Charles County, and Sen. Eric Schmitt, R-Glendale, are featured speakers at four upcoming ***Autism Insurance Reform Rallies***. The first rally is in the St. Louis area, scheduled for this Sunday, September 20, at 1:15 p.m. at the T.R. Hughes ball park. The remaining three events will be held in St. Joseph, Kansas City and Springfield, respectively, on the first weekend in October. The rallies are open to the public and free of charge. For more information on the upcoming events and to R.S.V.P. visit www.moautismbill.com or contact Sen. Rupp's office toll-free at (866) 271-2844.

Both senators are lead sponsors of autism insurance reform in Missouri and are participating in the rallies to highlight the urgent need to pass legislation making sure insurance coverage is available for families affected by autism.

“There is tremendous support for this much-needed legislation in Missouri, and Sen. Schmitt and I are working very hard to bring more attention to this critical issue so that we can pass meaningful legislation to help Missouri families impacted by this disorder,” Rupp said. “We hope that these FREE family fun events will help raise autism awareness and the need for common sense insurance coverage in Missouri.”

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, autism strikes one out of 150 children in this country — more than AIDS, juvenile diabetes and cancer, combined. Rupp noted that among the top 10 most common neurobiological disorders, private insurance provides coverage for all, except autism.

Schmitt said he knows firsthand the emotional, physical and financial costs associated with having a child with autism.

“I have come to know many families who struggle to afford the care their child desperately needs,” he said. “We must make sure insurance companies no longer turn their backs on these families and their children.”

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During the 2009 legislative session, Rupp and Schmitt sponsored [Senate Bill 167](#) that sought to require private insurance companies to provide insurance coverage for autism for individuals up to the age of 18. The reform measure was approved by the Missouri Senate, but did not advance in the Missouri House. Rupp and Schmitt said they intend to re-file the legislation during the 2010 legislative session.

Austism Insurance Reform Rallies

St. Louis:

Sunday, September 20, 1:15 p.m.

T.R. Hughes Ballpark located at the corner of T.R. Hughes Blvd. and Tom Ginnerver Avenue approximately one mile north of the T.R. Hughes Blvd. exit on Interstate 70 in O'Fallon. (Event runs from Noon to 4 p.m. - speakers at 1:15 p.m. – with free activities including a bounce house, face painting, music from the Dave Glover Band, and celebrity autographs from Darryl Strawberry, Ozzie Smith, Lou Brock, and others.)

**Press should check in at the Press Box inside the ballpark to secure interviews and other information. Press contact number on day of event: 573.356.9616*

St. Joseph:

Friday, October 2, 6 p.m.

Inside the East Hills Shopping Center, located at the intersection of Belt Highway and Frederick Ave. (three blocks west of Interstate 29 at Exit 47).

Kansas City:

Saturday, October 3, 10:30 a.m.

University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Nursing, 2464 Charlotte (located at 25th and Charlotte near Crown Center, east of Children's Mercy Hospital).

Springfield:

Saturday, October 3, 4:45 p.m

Burrell Autism Center, 1300 E. Bradford Parkway, Springfield, 4:45 p.m. (Event begins at 3:30 p.m. with family activities followed by a 4:15 p.m. children's parade.)

For more information on the upcoming free events that are open to the public, or to R.S.V.P., visit www.moautismbill.com or contact Sen. Scott T. Rupp's office toll-free at (866) 271-2844.

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