



MISSOURI SENATE
JEFFERSON CITY

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Sen. Eric Schmitt's Bill to Empower Parents Receives Senate Approval

JEFFERSON CITY – The Senate today showed its commitment to help the parents of children with disabilities by supporting legislation sponsored by Senator Eric Schmitt, R-Glendale. [Senate Bill 157](#) was approved by the full Senate and now moves to the House of Representatives.

“I am working in the Senate to be a voice for Missouri’s most vulnerable citizens and to serve as an advocate for their needs,” said Sen. Schmitt. “I am pleased with the success of this legislation and the good it can do to help accomplish this goal. I hope the House and Governor agree with the importance of this legislation.”

Senate Bill 157 codifies the five regional autism projects (Central, East, Northwest, Southeast, and Southwest Missouri) that collectively provide Autism Spectrum Disorder services to approximately 2,500 families statewide. The regional projects are run by the Department of Mental Health’s Division of Developmental Disabilities.

The legislation specifies that each project would have a regional parent advisory council and that the division would establish the Missouri Parent Advisory Committee on Autism. Parent advisory councils would include seven to nine individuals who have family members with autism, including young children, school-age children, and adults. Parent advisory councils’ responsibilities would include advocacy efforts, recommendation of services and policies, public education, and contact monitoring and cancellation.

“In my experience, when your child is diagnosed to be on the autism spectrum, you immediately want to be as involved as possible in their growth and development to make sure they have the best possible quality of life,” said Sen. Schmitt. “I want to ensure that family members across this state have a say in how the local resources that help their loved ones are utilized.”

The bill will now move to the House of Representatives where it must receive committee approval before reaching the House floor for debate.

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