



MISSOURI SENATE  
JEFFERSON CITY

Eric Schmitt  
15<sup>th</sup> Senate District  
Capitol Building, Room 334  
Jefferson City, MO 65101

**For Immediate Release:**  
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Contact: (573) 751-2853

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**Sen. Eric Schmitt's Bill Putting Autism Projects into  
State Law Receives Legislative Approval**  
*Regional Parent Advisory Councils Become  
Official With Governor's Signature*

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JEFFERSON CITY –A bill to make sure Autism Spectrum Disorder services in local areas meet the needs of the community received legislative approval yesterday (5/5). [Senate Bill 157](#), sponsored by Senator Eric Schmitt, R-Glendale, now moves to the governor's desk for his signature.

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 autism projects are currently included in the Code of State Regulations. The regional projects are run by the Department of Mental Health's Division of Developmental Disabilities.

The first project was established in 1991 as a result of families in rural Missouri approaching legislators to ask for autism-specific family support. Services provided by the projects include assessment, advocacy training, therapy, and parent or caregiver training.

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.

"This legislation ensures that programs and services that will help better the quality of life for those on the Autism Spectrum reach those who need them," Sen. Schmitt said. "I am pleased the first bill I successfully passed in the Missouri Senate solidifies the importance of having the input of local parents and family members when it comes to these necessary and beneficial resources."

With the governor's approval, the bill will go into effect on August 28<sup>th</sup> this year.

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