

STATE OF ILLINOIS
95th GENERAL ASSEMBLY
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE
TWENTY-SIXTH SPECIAL SESSION

1st Legislative Day

9/22/2008

Speaker Madigan: "The Twenty-sixth Special Session of the House will come to order. The Members will be in their chairs. And is there leave to use the Attendance Roll Call of the Twenty-fifth Special Session for the purpose of this Session. Leave is granted. Mr. Clerk, read the Governor's proclamation."

Clerk Bolin: "WHEREAS, approximately 1 in 150 children born in the United States are diagnosed with autism spectrum disorders, making it more common than all types of pediatric cancer, diabetes, and AIDS combined; and

WHEREAS, autism spectrum disorders affect children regardless of race, ethnicity, or social status; and

WHEREAS, proper diagnosis and treatment are critical to the development of children with autism spectrum disorders; and

WHEREAS, early diagnosis of an autism spectrum disorder can allow parents to initiate behavioral therapy, a common treatment that is more effective early in life and which, when begun early, has been shown to provide greater gains in language and IQ scores; and

WHEREAS, necessary therapy and treatment for the thousands of Illinois children diagnosed with autism spectrum disorders can cost up to \$5,000 a month per child; and

WHEREAS, currently, only people covered by large group insurance policies (with 50 or more beneficiaries) can obtain coverage for children with autism spectrum disorders, and even then, they can only receive inpatient and outpatient mental health services; and

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WHEREAS, despite strong support, the General Assembly has failed to pass a bill requiring insurance companies to cover the costs of diagnosing and providing children with autism spectrum disorders needed occupational, physical, and speech therapies, psychiatric and physiological services, and applied behavioral therapies.

THEREFORE, pursuant to Article IV, Section 5(b) of the Illinois Constitution of 1970, I hereby call and convene the 95th General Assembly, in duly constituted quorums capable of conducting business, in a special session to commence on September 22, 2008, at 2:00 p.m., to consider any measure mandating that insurance companies cover costs associated with diagnosis, therapy, and treatment for children with autism spectrum disorders. Rod R. Blagojevich, Governor. September 22, 2008."

Speaker Madigan: "Mr. Clerk, Resolutions."

Clerk Bolin: "Twenty-sixth Special Session Resolutions 1 and 2, offered by Representative Currie. Twenty-six..."

Speaker Madigan: "The Chair recognizes Representative Currie."

Currie: "Thank you, Speaker. I move for the immediate consideration and the suspension of all applicable House rules so that we might move to the adoption of Twenty-sixth Special Session House Resolutions 1 and 2."

Speaker Madigan: "You've all heard the Lady's Motion. Those in favor say 'aye'; those opposed say 'no'. The 'ayes' have it. The Motion is adopted. The Chair recognizes Representative Currie."

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Currie: "Thank you, Speaker. Would the Clerk please read House Resolutions 1 and 2 of the Twenty-sixth Special Session."

Speaker Madigan: "Mr. Clerk."

Clerk Bolin: "Twenty-sixth Special Session House Resolution #1. RESOLVED, that the Rules of the House of Representatives of the Ninety-Fifth General Assembly be adopted as the Rules of this Twenty-sixth Special Session, so far as the same may be applicable, and that the Committees of the House of Representatives of the Ninety-fifth General Assembly, shall constitute the Committees of the House during this Twenty-sixth Special Session. Twenty-sixth Special Session House Resolution #2.

RESOLVED, that the Clerk inform the Senate that a majority of the House of Representatives has assembled, pursuant to the proclamation of the Governor, convening a Twenty-sixth Special Session of the General Assembly, and are now ready for the transaction of business."

Speaker Madigan: "Representative Currie moves for the adoption of the Twenty-sixth Special Session Resolutions 1 and 2. Those in favor say 'aye'; those opposed say 'no'. The 'ayes' have it. The Resolution's are adopted. Mr. Black."

Black: "Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Inquiry of the Chair."

Speaker Madigan: "State your inquiry."

Black: "It's my understanding we're now in Special Session number two million six hundred and fifty thousand (2,650,000)... whatever it is, but it is to deal with matters relating to coverage of autism. Is that right? Let me...

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let me ask the Clerk, what is the status of House Bill 415?"

Clerk Bolin: "House Bill 415 has been referred to the House Rules Committee."

Black: "Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Was any Motion to Concur ever filed on that Bill?"

Clerk Bolin: "No Motions have been filed so far."

Black: "All right. Mr. Speaker, if I could, a further inquiry of the Chair."

Speaker Madigan: "State your inquiry."

Black: "Could the Clerk inform the Body what the status of Senate Bill 1900 is?"

Clerk Bolin: "Senate Bill 1900 has... referred to the House Rules Committee."

Black: "Was a Motion to Concur or to Recede ever filed on that Bill?"

Clerk Bolin: "A Motion to Recede has been filed and referred to the Rules Committee."

Black: "Mr. Speaker, in the interest of trying to do the business of this particular Special Session and I do not have the Motion before me in writing, but I would like to ask the Chair if we could not discharge Senate Bill 1900 from the Rules Committee. It passed the Senate unanimously. I think the overwhelming majority of the Members of the Body in the House would also like to move to consider the coverage of autism. I have had family experience with this. It's important to me, but I obviously don't have time to file the Motion in writing."

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Would you consider a Motion to Discharge Senate Bill 1900 from the House Rules Committee and hear the Motion of that Sponsor to recede so that we might take action on that Bill?"

Speaker Madigan: "You've all heard the Gentleman's Motion. Representative Currie."

Currie: "Thank you, Speaker. I object."

Speaker Madigan: "Mr. Black."

Black: "I'm not surprised, Mr. Speaker, disappointed, but not surprised. On behalf of my family, on behalf of everyone who has known the pain of autism, needs this coverage. I... I am incredulous at what we do when... when politics trumps the needs of some of our most vulnerable citizens and families who need help and young children who need help if they're to lead productive lives. I cannot believe... I fail to understand how we could possibly turn our back on this particular issue, at this particular time. We could have done the right thing. I think it would have passed overwhelmingly. I'm extremely disappointed that we will not have an opportunity to do so and shame, shame on this Body for that."

Speaker Madigan: "Representative Bellock."

Bellock: "Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. To the Bill or a point of personal privilege to speak to this."

Speaker Madigan: "Point of personal privilege."

Bellock: "Thank you. I just wanted to reiterate what Representative Black was talking about. We have been down here for several months off and on through the summer. We

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now with the funds sweeps Bill we talked about the historic parks today and the sites, but the people in the State of Illinois that are disabled, that are mentally ill, substance abuse, and especially parents with children of autism. Last year we sat through two (2) hearings six (6) hours a piece and parent upon parent talked about how they had to mortgage their house, how they had to move away to a different state in order to get services. The average parent spends forty thousand dollars (\$40,000) a year on services for their children with autism. We need to do something. We have to stop playing the political games between different chambers and the administration and help these parents and these children to survive and get the services that they deserve. Thank you."

Speaker Madigan: "Mr. Saviano."

Saviano: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise on this... on this subject and I think I've talked a lot about this over the Session. In passing Senate Bill 1900 and addressing what the previous speaker said, the pain the families are feeling regarding early intervention, especially for these... for these autistic children which is the most crucial time of their life to get them a jump-start and to make them productive members of society. I guess I would make an inquiry of the Chair ultimately what... what is the reasoning to the objection by the Majority Leader to such a simple maneuver or procedure in our process. Is there... I guess I would ask the question, is there any reason for this? We all... all our offices have gotten barraged with phone calls

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from families across the state regarding this issue. I don't quite understand. I mean, I'm not naive and maybe the Majority Leader has an alternative plan to provide these services to autistic children, but if... if that's the case I'm willing to work with you and I would hope they would share that with the chamber so we could give these families and these people an answer and maybe some hope in seeing somewhere in the future that their children would be able to be treated in a efficient way with the proper funding necessary in delivering that treatment. And I... I guess I'm pleading with you at this point, because I just... I mean I have meetings... I've had meetings since the end of Session maybe four (4) or five (5) with different autistic groups. As a member of the Illinois Autism Task Force, it befuddles me why we're... we're playing games with this issue. We've worked on this, the people... the parents who worked on this and they weren't lobbyists, they were unpaid parents who met with insurance companies, met with business. They capped this at thirty-six thousand dollars (\$36,000) a year from what I understand. Most... most cases only require maybe five or six thousand (5,000 or 6,000) a year in therapy in the early years. Could someone please give me a reason in this chamber why we're... why we're not addressing this and putting it behind us? 'Cause I think there's other things that we have to deal with in this state and this is one simple solution to a major problem that our families are facing. Thank you."

Speaker Madigan: "Representative Chapa LaVia."

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Chapa LaVia: "Thank you, Speaker and Members of the House. I have the same concerns. I have one of the largest facilities that help with MI... MI and DD and something that is discussed in my district a lot is the services that we don't provide. How we are fifty-first (51) and those people want to say how are we fifty-first (51) out of fifty (50) states? They put us behind the District of Columbia for funding DD and MI and it's something we can't be proud of as a state. I know I'm not. So, I would really and sincerely hope that we continue this discussion and come to some kind of grips of how we're going to fund these agencies and especially AID in my district. They're taking out bank loans because they can't pay the bills that we were supposed to give them as far as dollars owed. I think it's something like... it was three million (3,000,000) last week that we owed them in back pay. So, I would sincerely hope for those individuals in this state that do not have a voice, that can't possibly travel here, that we consider this issue with more sincerity. Thank you."

Speaker Madigan: "Representative Currie moves that the Twenty-sixth Special Session stand adjourned until Tuesday, September 23, at 11 a.m. Those in favor say 'aye'; those opposed say 'no'. The 'ayes' have it. There shall be a meeting at 2:30 in Room 114 regarding the supplemental appropriation Bill. Again, Room 214, excuse me, Room 114, 2:30, supplemental appropriation Bill. And with that the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 11 a.m."