

STATE SENATOR • TUPAC A. HUNTER • 5TH DISTRICT

Hunter Press Release

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Senator Hunter Calls For Action On Autism Insurance Bills

Legislation would go farther than BCBS insurance coverage plans

LANSING- Tupac Hunter (D-Detroit) said today that the state needs to go further and require more coverage for autism services than what Blue Cross Blue Shield is planning to offer starting this July.

“While Blue Cross Blue Shield has taken a small step in the right direction, I have introduced bills that would offer even more help to families struggling with autism, but my bills remain bottled up in a Senate committee,” said Senator Hunter. “Rather than send my bills to the Health Policy Committee where they belong, Senate Republicans sent them to the Committee on Economic Development and Regulatory Reform. It is time for the Senate Republicans to quit playing politics with the lives of Michigan’s children and deal properly with my autism legislation.”

Blue Cross Blue Shield announced this week that they would offer to employers a plan that will allow for up to 60 treatment visits for one child for applied behavior analysis treatment. Employers can choose to offer this insurance, or they can choose not to offer it to their employees.

Senator Hunter’s bills--Senate Bills 177, 359 and 360--would create an autism research fund funded by an income tax check-off; make treatment programs more accessible to parents and their children early in their diagnosis; and cover more autism services including therapeutic evaluations and interventions, speech therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, intensive early intervention, and applied behavioral analysis and therapy.

“We need to do more for these children and their families because autism is not going to go away after 60 treatments through one kind of therapy,” said Senator Hunter. “This is about helping these children reach their full potential, and I urge my Senate Republican colleagues to move my bills so that we can truly help these families.”

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Sen. Hunter represents the 5th district, which is comprised of northwest Detroit, Dearborn and Inkster. He serves as Minority Vice Chair of the Banking & Financial Institutions and the Homeland Security & Emerging Technologies Committees. He is also a member of the Commerce & Tourism and the Economic Development & Regulatory Reform Committees.

