

STATE SENATOR • TUPAC A. HUNTER • 5TH DISTRICT

Hunter Press Release

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Senator Hunter and Senator Thomas Sponsor Stronger Autism Insurance Bills

Legislation would not allow coverage limits on doctor/therapy visits and most treatments

LANSING- State Senator Tupac A. Hunter (D-Detroit) and his Senate colleague, Democratic Floor-leader Senator Buzz Thomas (D-Detroit) today introduced new, stronger legislation to require that insurance companies cover the diagnosis and treatment of autism spectrum disorder.

“The treatments for autism spectrum disorder are extremely expensive, costing Michigan families an average of nearly \$30,000 per year,” said Senator Hunter. “This is not a political issue, or a geographic issue pitting one side of the state against the other. We need to join our colleagues in the House of Representatives and give Michigan citizens the relief from these high costs that families in many other states already have.”

The new Senate bills, which are identical to House Bills that passed the House earlier this summer with bipartisan support, would require insurance companies to offer coverage for autism spectrum disorder. Except for Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) treatments, the bills would not allow limits on the number of visits that could be made to an autism services provider. Coverage would not be subject to dollar limits, co-pays, deductibles, or coinsurance provisions that did not apply to physical illness in general. Coverage limits for ABA would be subject to a maximum annual benefit of \$50,000.

“Autism spectrum disorder affects families across Michigan at a rate that is truly alarming,” said Senator Thomas. “Nearly one in every 150 children is born with this developmental disorder and nearly 1 in 200 hundred children have a milder form of autism. It is time that we recognize the financial burden these families face and pass meaningful legislation to help them.”

In June, the House of Representatives passed the same package of bills with substantial bipartisan support.

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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.