



**FILED**  
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SECRETARY OF STATE INDEX DEPT.

**SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS**

**2008-372**

**PROCLAMATION**

**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

**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 95<sup>th</sup> 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

Dated: September 22, 2008