



**BAY AREA ADVOCACY  
COMMITTEE**

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## **Autism Speaks Bay Area Advocacy Committee**

We are a group of San Francisco Bay Area parents advocating for legislative solutions to the problems faced by children with autism and their families in California and the U.S. as a whole. We are collaborating with Autism Speaks on issues such as insurance coverage for autism treatment, effective and adequately-funded educational programs, and coordination of care systems like private providers, Regional Centers and school districts.

Here is information about current legislation relating to autism. . When communicating with your legislators, please mention these bills. Go to [www.legislature.ca.gov](http://www.legislature.ca.gov) to find your California representatives, and [www.leginfo.ca.gov/bilinfo.html](http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/bilinfo.html) to keep track of California legislation. Find your Congressman at [www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov), and find contact information for California Senators Barbara Boxer and Dianne Feinstein at [www.senate.gov](http://www.senate.gov). You can sign up for advocacy alerts from Autism Speaks by visiting:

[http://www.autismwalk.org/site/PageServer?pagename=adv\\_sign\\_up](http://www.autismwalk.org/site/PageServer?pagename=adv_sign_up)

### **Bills of Interest in Current Session – State**

**A.B. 1663 (Leiber) Special Education – Conformance to Fed’l Law WATCH** – This bill is more controversial. It’s the bill that brings the CA Education Code back in line with IDEA 2004, but it removes current protections in CA law that (though currently not being enforced) hold an IFSP as equal to an IEP – meaning that families transitioning from Part C to Part B (from Regional Centers to School Districts) can invoke Stay Put until disputes about the child’s Part B program can be resolved. This is a huge tool for parents, and this bill must include language that affirms the Stay Put provision for IFSPs – it is expected to pass either way. A major advocacy point in favor of restoring the language affirming the Stay Put right is that the Blue Ribbon Commission has already identified the transition at age three as one of the biggest gaps that needs to be addressed.

### **A.B. 16 (Hernandez) Pupil Immunizations – OPPOSE**

This bill would remove almost all support for parent choice over whether to vaccinate a child and instead leave the decision in the hands of public health officials. Currently, parents in California can exempt their children from vaccination on medical, religious or philosophical grounds. This bill would remove those exemptions and substitute a weaker clause exempting kids from vaccinations due to “parental beliefs.” School districts could still deny kids access to school even if parents exercised that exemption. This is not a vaccination issue but a parent choice issue.

**S.B. 527 (Steinberg) Autism Spectrum Disorders – Screening – SUPPORT**

Requires physicians who treat children to routinely evaluate children age five or younger for behaviors resembling those identified as autistic spectrum disorders. Requires these physicians to provide parents and legal guardians with information on cognitive impairments and organizations that provide resources and services for children with autistic spectrum disorders, as specified. Requires the Department of Developmental Services to implement its guidelines for the screening and diagnosis of autistic spectrum disorders for children enrolled in the Early Start program no later than January 1, 2009.

**Bills of Interest in Current Session – Federal**

**S. 937 (Clinton) Expanding the Promise of Individuals With Autism – SUPPORT**

Convenes a task force to evaluate evidence-based biomedical and behavioral treatments and services for individuals with autism and establishes a multi-year demonstration grant program for states to provide evidence-based autism treatments, interventions, and services. Also establishes other Federal grants with the objective of improving the access to services of individuals with autism and their families. (Corresponding House bill is H.R. 1881).

**S. 1159 (Harkin and Hagel) IDEA Full Funding Act – SUPPORT**

Would mandate full funding of IDEA by 2016. (Corresponding House bill is H.R. 821)