

SENATE BILL NO. 368—SENATORS TOWNSEND AND MATHEWS

MARCH 19, 2007

Referred to Committee on Finance

SUMMARY—Creates the Nevada Autism Task Force.
(BDR S-1134)

FISCAL NOTE: Effect on Local Government: No.
Effect on the State: Contains Appropriation not included
in Executive Budget.

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EXPLANATION – Matter in **bolded italics** is new; matter between brackets **fornitted-material** is material to be omitted.

AN ACT relating to autism; creating the Nevada Autism Task Force; making an appropriation; and providing other matters properly relating thereto.

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF NEVADA, REPRESENTED IN
SENATE AND ASSEMBLY, DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

- 1 **Section 1.** The Legislature hereby finds and declares that:
2 1. Autism is a complex developmental disability that typically
3 appears during the first years of life;
4 2. As many as 1,500,000 Americans are believed to have some
5 form of autism;
6 3. The number of children with autism is increasing, and a new
7 study shows 1 in 150 Americans is autistic;
8 4. Autistic behaviors not only make life difficult for people
9 with autism but also make life hard for their families, health care
10 providers and teachers;
11 5. Families coping with this devastating disorder are searching
12 for answers about its causes, diagnosis, prevention and treatment;
13 6. Presently, there are no effective means to prevent, fully treat
14 or cure the disorder;
15 7. Early intervention is critical for affected children to gain
16 maximum benefit from current therapies; and
17 8. Strategies designed to best prevent, identify, treat and
18 accommodate the needs of individuals with autism and their families
19 are urgently needed.



* S B 3 6 8 *

1 **Sec. 2.** 1. The Nevada Autism Task Force is hereby created
2 to study and make recommendations to the Governor and the
3 Legislature regarding the growing incidence of autism and ways to
4 improve the delivery and coordination of autism services in the
5 State.

6 2. The Task Force shall consist of 14 members who are
7 appointed as follows:

8 (a) One member of the Senate appointed by the Majority Leader
9 of the Senate;

10 (b) One member of the Senate appointed by the Minority Leader
11 of the Senate;

12 (c) One member of the Assembly appointed by the Speaker of
13 the Assembly;

14 (d) One member of the Assembly appointed by the Minority
15 Leader of the Assembly; and

16 (e) Ten members appointed by the Governor, who must include:

17 (1) Three parents of children with autism;

18 (2) Four representatives of the Autism Coalition of Nevada;

19 (3) The Director of the Department of Health and Human
20 Services or his designee;

21 (4) The Superintendent of Public Instruction or his designee;
22 and

23 (5) An expert in the field of early intervention services.

24 3. The Governor shall designate a Chairman and Vice
25 Chairman for the Task Force from among the 14 members
26 appointed.

27 4. The Task Force shall:

28 (a) Hold not more than six open meetings each year where
29 parents, educators and experts in the field, among others, can
30 present testimony and information to the Task Force;

31 (b) Review the available literature and consult with experts to
32 gain an understanding of the causes of the disorder and its incidence
33 in Nevada;

34 (c) Assess the availability of services currently provided for
35 early screening, diagnosis and treatment of the disorder;

36 (d) Review the effectiveness of programs and services currently
37 provided to individuals with autism and their families;

38 (e) Review other issues and concerns that the Task Force
39 believes would be helpful in arriving at sound policy
40 recommendations; and

41 (f) Work in cooperation with the Director of the Department of
42 Health and Human Services, and design and implement at least two
43 pilot projects focused on meeting the unique needs of autistic
44 children in the State.



1 **Sec. 3.** The Nevada Autism Task Force shall complete its
2 review and submit its findings and recommendations to the
3 Governor and to the Director of the Legislative Counsel Bureau for
4 transmittal to the appropriate legislative committees on or before
5 August 1, 2008.

6 **Sec. 4.** The Director of the Department of Health and Human
7 Services shall provide the personnel, facilities, equipment and
8 supplies required by the Nevada Autism Task Force to carry out the
9 provisions of sections 2 to 6, inclusive, of this act. The Director may
10 seek additional staff assistance from the Department of Education
11 and the Legislative Counsel Bureau.

12 **Sec. 5.** The members of the Nevada Autism Task Force serve
13 without compensation. While engaged in the business of the Task
14 Force, each member is entitled to receive the per diem allowance
15 and travel expenses provided for state officers and employees
16 generally.

17 **Sec. 6.** 1. There is hereby appropriated from the State
18 General Fund to the Department of Health and Human Services the
19 sum of \$4,500,000 to provide for expenses of the Nevada Autism
20 Task Force, including, without limitation, travel and meeting costs,
21 and to fund the Task Force's share of pilot programs designed and
22 implemented pursuant to section 2 of this act.

23 2. Any remaining balance of the appropriation made by
24 subsection 1 of this act must not be committed for expenditure after
25 June 30, 2009, by the entity to which the appropriation is made or
26 any entity to which the money from the appropriation is granted or
27 otherwise transferred in any manner, and any portion of the
28 appropriated money remaining must not be spent for any purpose
29 after September 18, 2009, by either the entity to which the money
30 was appropriated or the entity to which the money was subsequently
31 granted or transferred, and must be reverted to the State General
32 Fund on or before September 18, 2009.

33 **Sec. 7.** This act becomes effective on July 1, 2007.

