

By the Committee on Education; and Senator Klein

581-1915-05

1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to regional autism centers;
3 amending s. 1004.55, F.S.; creating an
4 additional regional autism center in the state;
5 reducing the number of counties within the
6 service areas of two existing regional autism
7 centers; providing for consistency in service
8 delivery; encouraging each constituency board
9 to raise funds; providing a prohibition;
10 providing an effective date.

12 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

14 Section 1. Subsections (1) through (4) of section
15 1004.55, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

16 1004.55 Regional autism centers.--

17 (1) Seven ~~Six~~ regional autism centers are established
18 to provide nonresidential resource and training services for
19 persons of all ages and of all levels of intellectual
20 functioning who have autism, as defined in s. 393.063; who
21 have a pervasive developmental disorder that is not otherwise
22 specified; who have an autistic-like disability; who have a
23 dual sensory impairment; or who have a sensory impairment with
24 other handicapping conditions. Each center shall be
25 operationally and fiscally independent and shall provide
26 services within its geographical region of the state provided
27 that service delivery shall be consistent for all centers.

28 Each center shall coordinate services within and between state
29 and local agencies and school districts but may not duplicate
30 services provided by those agencies or school districts. The
31 respective locations and service areas of the centers are:

1 (a) The Department of Communication Disorders at
2 Florida State University, which serves Bay, Calhoun, Escambia,
3 Franklin, Gadsden, Gulf, Holmes, Jackson, Jefferson, Leon,
4 Liberty, Madison, Okaloosa, Santa Rosa, Taylor, Wakulla,
5 Walton, and Washington Counties.

6 (b) The College of Medicine at the University of
7 Florida, which serves Alachua, Bradford, Citrus, Columbia,
8 Dixie, Gilchrist, Hamilton, Hernando, Lafayette, Levy, Marion,
9 Putnam, Suwannee, and Union Counties.

10 (c) The University of Florida Health Science Center at
11 Jacksonville, which serves Baker, Clay, Duval, Flagler,
12 Nassau, and St. Johns Counties.

13 (d) The Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health
14 Institute at the University of South Florida, which serves
15 Charlotte, Collier, DeSoto, Glades, Hardee, Hendry, Highlands,
16 Hillsborough, ~~Indian River~~, Lee, Manatee, ~~Martin~~, ~~Okeechobee~~,
17 Pasco, Pinellas, Polk, ~~St. Lucie~~, and Sarasota Counties.

18 (e) The Mailman Center for Child Development and the
19 Department of Psychology at the University of Miami, which
20 serves Broward, Dade, and Monroe, ~~and Palm Beach~~ Counties.

21 (f) The College of Health and Public Affairs at the
22 University of Central Florida, which serves Brevard, Lake,
23 Orange, Osceola, Seminole, Sumter, and Volusia Counties.

24 (g) The Department of Exceptional Student Education at
25 Florida Atlantic University, which serves Palm Beach, Martin,
26 St. Lucie, Okeechobee, and Indian River Counties.

27 (2) There is established for each center a
28 constituency board, which shall work collaboratively with the
29 center. Each board shall consist of no fewer than six members,
30 each of whom is either an individual who has a disability that
31 is described in subsection (1) or is a member of a family that

1 includes a person who has such a disability, who are selected
2 by each university president from a list that has been
3 developed by the Autism Society of Florida and other relevant
4 constituency groups that represent persons who have sensory
5 impairments as described in subsection (1). As representatives
6 of the center's constituencies, these boards shall meet
7 quarterly with the staff of each of the centers to provide
8 advice on policies, priorities, and activities. Each board
9 shall submit to the university president and to the Department
10 of Education an annual report that evaluates the activities
11 and accomplishments of its center during the year. The board
12 for each center should raise funds equivalent to 2 percent of
13 the total funds allocated to that center in each fiscal year.

14 (3) To promote statewide planning and coordination, a
15 conference must be held annually for staff from each of the
16 seven ~~five~~ centers and representatives from each center's
17 constituency board. The purpose of the conference is to
18 facilitate coordination, networking, cross-training, and
19 feedback among the staffs and constituency boards of the
20 centers.

21 (4) (a) Each center shall provide:

22 1. (a) A staff that has expertise in autism and
23 autistic-like behaviors and in sensory impairments.

24 2. (b) Individual and direct family assistance in the
25 home, community, and school. A center's assistance should not
26 supplant other responsibilities of state and local agencies,
27 and each school district is responsible for providing an
28 appropriate education program for clients of a center who are
29 school age.

30 3. (c) Technical assistance and consultation services,
31 including specific intervention and assistance for a client of

1 the center, the client's family, and the school district, and
2 any other services that are appropriate.

3 ~~4.(d)~~ Professional training programs that include
4 developing, providing, and evaluating preservice and inservice
5 training in state-of-the-art practices for personnel who work
6 with the populations served by the centers and their families.

7 ~~5.(e)~~ Public education programs to increase awareness
8 of the public about autism, autistic-related disabilities of
9 communication and behavior, dual sensory impairments, and
10 sensory impairments with other handicapping conditions.

11 (b) Direct medical intervention or pharmaceutical
12 intervention is prohibited in any center on or after July 1,
13 2008.

14 Section 2. This act shall take effect upon becoming a
15 law.

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17 STATEMENT OF SUBSTANTIAL CHANGES CONTAINED IN
18 COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE FOR
19 Senate Bill 1716

20 The committee substitute provides that Regional Autism Centers
21 should, rather than must, raise the amount of funds specified
22 in the bill. By July 1, 2008, the centers must prohibit direct
23 medical or pharmaceutical intervention.
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