

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS  
**MASSACHUSETTS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
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## **PRESS RELEASE**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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### **REPRESENTATIVE BARBARA L'ITALIEN ANNOUNCES SIGNING OF AUTISM BILL**

**BOSTON, MA** – Representative Barbara L'Italien (D-Andover) today announced the signing of House 1123 – An Act to Address the Special Education Needs of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder. The L'Italien sponsored bill was passed by the House of Representatives and Senate in late March and signed by the Governor on April 7<sup>th</sup> becoming Chapter 57 of the Acts of 2006.

This bill ensures that IEP Teams for children diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder consider and address the complex communication, behavioral, social, emotional, sensory, and other academic needs that are known to be associated with autism. The bill specifically requires IEP Teams to consider the following areas for children with ASD:

- Verbal and non-verbal communication needs;
- The need to develop social interaction skills and proficiencies;
- Unusual responses to sensory experiences;
- The needs resulting from the child's resistance to environmental and routine changes;
- The needs resulting from the child's engagement in repetitive activities and stereotypical movements;
- The need for behavioral interventions, strategies, and supports; and
- Other needs that result from ASD that impact the child's progress in the regular education curriculum.

"I am very pleased that this bill has been signed into law," said Rep. L'Italien. "It is extremely important that we ensure the educational needs of children with autism are being met."

Autism is the most widely diagnosed developmental disability in the nation, affecting 1 in 166 children, a ten-fold increase over the past 20 years. It is more common than the sum of all childhood cancers, muscular dystrophy, juvenile diabetes and cystic fibrosis combined. Every day, 66 children are diagnosed with autism...nearly 3 per hour.

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