

**VETO MESSAGE:**

VETO MESSAGE - No. 50

TO THE SENATE:

I am returning herewith, without my approval, the following bill:

Senate Bill Number 8475-A, entitled:

"AN ACT to amend the mental hygiene law, in relation to an autism spectrum disorder prevalence study"

NOT APPROVED

This bill would require the Office of Mental Retardation and Develop- mental Disabilities (OMRDD) to: (1) conduct an epidemiological study to identify the causes of Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASDs) and provide information on the prevalence of ASDs in the state; (2) establish and maintain, through the agency's Institute for Basic Research in Develop- mental Disabilities (IBR), a "limited registry" of individuals with autism, based in two or more counties as determined by OMRDD, without the identifying information of any child whose parent objects to the child's inclusion in the registry; (3) provide for a more thorough screening for any individual who appears, based on an initial screening, to have autism (although the bill does not specify that the epidemiolog- ical study must involve such initial screenings); (4) establish a reporting mechanism for the designated counties so that physicians, psychologists, and other qualified health care practitioners who diag- nose a child with an ASD can report the diagnosis; (5) create a clinical workgroup to establish best practices and guidelines for the assessment and diagnosis of ASD and, using the results of the study, plan for and

provide services to children with ASD and their families.

OMRDD currently serves over 16,000 individuals with autism or ASDs, including 4,000 individuals in residential settings. The IBR, which is OMRDD's research arm, is engaged in 22 different research endeavors involving autism and ASDs and has sponsored a number of relevant conferences and other training activities. In May, OMRDD announced the creation of a comprehensive Autism Platform, encompassing several key initiatives including: (1) an increase in the number of ASD-related projects at IBR, including the creation of a national autism tissue bank; (2) a newly created ASD research consortium which will facilitate the pooling of research and treatment resources between IBR and various academic research centers; (3) the establishment of an Interagency Task Force on Autism, which will bring together several state agencies to collaborate on the provision of appropriate services and supports to individuals with ASDs; (4) an examination of the prevalence of ASDs in New York State through creation of a voluntary registry of children and adults with ASDs; and (5) development of a professional training program to assist practitioners in diagnosing and providing appropriate treatments and supports for people with ASDs.

The bill is largely duplicative of the Autism Platform. In addition, the Department of Health (DOH) has already developed clinical practice guidelines for the diagnosis of ASDs, and today I am signing another bill (A.9512-A/S.6527-B) directing DOH to issue best practice protocols based on those developed by the American Academy of Pediatrics for use by pediatricians in screening children for ASDs.

Moreover, the Division of the Budget advises that the bill would cost approximately \$31 million over the next five years. Given the State's current financial difficulties, when all agencies have been asked to carry out their responsibilities with limited resources, approval of this bill, which would require additional funds for efforts that largely duplicate a new agency initiative that has not yet been implemented, is not necessary.

I have today, for reasons similar to those set forth here, disapproved another bill, S.5760/A.11275, and in conjunction with that disapproval directed the Commissioner of OMRDD to report to the Legislature as to the progress of the Autism Platform within 18 months of this date. That report should provide the Legislature with much of the information it hoped to secure through passage of this bill.

The bill is disapproved.  
PATERSON

(signed) DAVID A.

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