

SESSION OF 2007

**CONFERENCE COMMITTEE REPORT BRIEF
SENATE BILL NO. 138**

As Agreed to April 26, 2007

Brief*

SB 138 would establish the Kansas Autism Task Force to study and conduct hearings on issues relating to the needs and services available for people with autism. The Task Force would report to the Legislative Educational Planning Committee with a preliminary report by November 15, 2007, and a final report by November 15, 2008. The provisions of the act would expire on December 31, 2008. The Task Force would be composed of twenty voting members and four *ex-officio* members.

Conference Committee Action

The Conference Committee agreed to the House amendments to the bill and agreed to further amend the bill to increase the membership of the task by adding one *ex-officio* member, a representative of the Capper Foundation.

Background

At the Senate Committee hearing on the bill, Senator Dennis Wilson, representatives of the Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services, Children's Mercy Hospital, Sedgwick County, the Kansas Association of School Boards, the Kansas Coalition for Autism Legislation, and a parent of a child with autism testified in support of the bill. There were no

*Conference committee report briefs are prepared by the Legislative Research Department and do not express legislative intent. No summary is prepared when the report is an agreement to disagree. Conference committee report briefs may be accessed on the Internet at <http://www.kslegislature.org/kldr>

opponents to the bill.

The Senate Education Committee amended the bill adding two additional members to the original thirteen-member Task Force. The two additional members include a member to be appointed by the Insurance Commissioner and a representative of The Capper Foundation. A second amendment changed the requirements for a quorum from six to seven members. A third amendment added language that would limit compensation for Task Force participation only to those not already being compensated by their employers. Another amendment changed language regarding recommendations for best practices. Finally, a technical amendment was approved.

The House Health and Human Services Committee amendments:

- Increase the number of voting members of the task force to 21 (adds three parents who have a child with autism, one parent of a child with autism selected by the parents appointed to the task force, and one psychiatrist) and adds three *ex-officio* task force members (Secretaries of Health and Environment and Social and Rehabilitation Services and the Commissioner of Education);
- Specify that one of the Governor's appointees be an occupational therapist;
- Increase the number of members who can request a meeting of the task force and the quorum of members to eleven;
- Replace references to "intensive behavioral therapy" with "evidence-based intervention" throughout the bill;
- Broaden one of the study topics from the "availability of insurance and the extent of coverage" to the "benefits currently available for services provided to children with autism";

- Restate the provision requiring study and hearings relating to an autism registry to require the task force to study and hold hearings on the study and discussion of an autism registry and struck a provision related to use of an autism registry by the Legislature for budgeting the cost of providing services to children with autism; and
- Create a new study requirement: the creation and design of a financial assistance program for children with autism.

The Committee also made amendments that were technical in nature.

The House Committee of the Whole amendment decreased the voting membership of the task force by eliminating the Capper Foundation appointee.

The fiscal note on the original bill indicated \$83,448 would be needed in FY 2008 to fund activities of the Task Force. The House Committee amendments may alter the fiscal impact of the bill.