



2007 SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 105

March 11, 2008 – Introduced by Senators PLALE and DARLING, cosponsored by Representatives ZEPNICK and SINICKI. Referred to Committee on Senate Organization.

1 **Relating to:** expressing support for the Milwaukee Center for Independence.

2 Whereas, the Milwaukee Center for Independence (MCFI) is a nonprofit
3 community-based organization responding to the increasing and changing needs of
4 special needs populations since 1938; and

5 Whereas, MCFI's mission is to assist families with special needs to better live
6 and work in the community; and

7 Whereas, MCFI's vision is to be the preferred expert rehabilitation resource for
8 the community in assessment, treatment, and planning to serve individuals and
9 families with special needs across their life spans; and

10 Whereas, approximately one-half million children under 18 years of age live in
11 the seven-county region of southeastern Wisconsin; and

12 Whereas, more than 28,000 children are born in this region each year; and

13 Whereas, it is estimated that on average more than 2,700 of these 28,000
14 children will develop a lifetime disability; and

1 Whereas, the special needs population is defined as those who have “a chronic
2 physical, developmental, behavioral, or emotional condition and who also require
3 health related services of a type or amount beyond that required by children
4 generally”; and

5 Whereas, according to the National Survey of Children with Special Health
6 Care Needs, over 60,000 children from birth to age 17 are in need of special health
7 care in Wisconsin; and

8 Whereas, more than 21,000 children in Milwaukee and 44,000 children in
9 southeastern Wisconsin have been diagnosed with disabilities; and

10 Whereas, according to the Center for Urban Population Health, University of
11 Wisconsin (UW) School of Medicine and Public Health, the percentage of children
12 who have special health care needs in Milwaukee is 23.5 percent, almost double the
13 national average; and

14 Whereas, according to the Center for Urban Population Health, UW School of
15 Medicine and Public Health, since 2001, diagnosed cases of autism have risen 68
16 percent, visual impairment 22 percent, traumatic brain injury 30 percent, and
17 developmental delays 20 percent; and

18 Whereas, all of these increases in disabilities, lack of funding, service gaps, and
19 lack of education and awareness of this rapidly growing epidemic have significantly
20 contributed to increasing Milwaukee Public Schools failure rates according to the
21 National Survey of Children with Special Care Needs; and

22 Whereas, increasing numbers of children with disabilities represent a growing
23 burden on government programs, school systems, families, and taxpayers; and

24 Whereas, to address this troubling trend, MCFI recommends that a regional
25 diagnostic, treatment, and resource center be developed in order to provide

1 cost-effective, cross-disciplinary strategies for diagnosis, care, and longitudinal
2 treatment planning for families with children with disabilities; and

3 Whereas, strong leadership has been demonstrated by a task force consisting
4 of representatives from the Milwaukee Public Schools, the City of Milwaukee Health
5 Department, the Milwaukee County Health and Human Services, the
6 UW-Milwaukee, and the state Department of Health and Family Services in
7 addressing the issue of children with disabilities in southeastern Wisconsin; and

8 Whereas, Congress has designated the month of October as National Disability
9 Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM), to increase public awareness of the
10 contributions and skills of Americans with disabilities; and

11 Whereas, according to MCFT's report on children with disabilities, significant
12 cost savings can be achieved and compliance with treatment can be improved,
13 resulting in better outcomes by reallocating current resources and coordinating
14 treatment programs around the families of children with disabilities; and

15 Whereas, more funding initiatives and leadership must be exercised to realize
16 a vision of a central, coordinated resource center to facilitate improved diagnosis,
17 coordinated treatment, and referral for this specific population of need; now,
18 therefore, be it

19 ***Resolved by the senate, the assembly concurring, That*** the legislature
20 expresses its support for the charge and the mission of the Milwaukee Center for
21 Independence; and, be it further

22 ***Resolved, That*** we urge the governor to convene a task force to identify
23 funding for the development of a southeastern Wisconsin regional diagnostic,
24 treatment, and resource facility for children with disabilities and their families and
25 to deal with associated issues; and, be it further

