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.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Whereas, it is estimated that on average more than 2,700 of these 28,000 children will develop a lifetime disability; and
Whereas, the special needs population is defined as those who have “a chronic physical, developmental, behavioral, or emotional condition and who also require health related services of a type or amount beyond that required by children generally”; and

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

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

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

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

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

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

Whereas, to address this troubling trend, MCFI recommends that a regional diagnostic, treatment, and resource center be developed in order to provide
cost-effective, cross-disciplinary strategies for diagnosis, care, and longitudinal
treatment planning for families with children with disabilities; and

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

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

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

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

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

Resolved, That we urge the governor to convene a task force to identify
funding for the development of a southeastern Wisconsin regional diagnostic,
treatment, and resource facility for children with disabilities and their families and
to deal with associated issues; and, be it further
Resolved, That the senate chief clerk shall transmit a copy of this joint resolution to the governor and to the mayor of Milwaukee.

(END)