

SENATE  
S. No. 2940

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Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

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### EXPLANATORY NOTE

According to Article XIII Section 11 of the 1987 Constitution:

The State shall adopt an integrated and comprehensive approach to health development which shall endeavor to make essential goods, health and other social services available to all the people at affordable cost. There shall be priority for the needs of the under-privileged, sick, elderly, disabled, women, and children. The State shall endeavor to provide free medical care to paupers.

**Autism** is a brain development disorder that is characterized by impaired social interaction and communication, and restricted and repetitive behavior, all starting before a child is three years old. Autism has a strong genetic basis, although the genetics of autism are complex and it is unclear whether ASD is explained more by multigene interactions or by rare mutations. In rare cases, autism is strongly associated with agents that cause birth defects. Other proposed causes, such as childhood vaccines, are controversial; the vaccine hypotheses lack convincing scientific evidence. Most recent reviews estimate a prevalence of one to two cases per 1,000 people for autism, and about six per 1,000 for ASD, with ASD averaging a 4.3:1 male-to-female ratio. The number of people known to have autism has increased dramatically since the 1980s, at least partly as a result of changes in diagnostic practice; the question of whether actual prevalence has increased is unresolved.

The causes of Autism and other disorders that becomes manifest during childhood must be identified so that preventive measures will be institutionalized. The knowledge that we will

gain through a comprehensive approach to this problem will benefit not only our country, but also the worldwide scientific community.

*Miriam Defensor Santiago*  
MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO

8 DEC - 5 11:00

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RECEIVED  


Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

1 AN ACT  
2 ESTABLISHING AN ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
3 WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH TO STUDY ISSUES RELATED TO  
4 AUTISM, AND INFANT AND TODDLER IMMUNE SYSTEM DISORDERS  
5

6 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress*  
7 *assembled:*

8 SECTION 1. *Advisory Panel on Autism and Immune Deficiency Disorders in Infants and*  
9 *Toddlers.* The Department of Health shall create an advisory panel to:

- 10 a) Review medical and scientific data regarding any relationship between infant and  
11 toddler immune system development and adverse reactions to childhood  
12 immunizations;
- 13 b) Facilitate the development and use of an autism registry to help study the causes of  
14 autism;
- 15 c) Review scientific data regarding the genetic and environmental components of autism  
16 and immune system disorders and how that information may lead to preventive  
17 measures;
- 18 d) Create a public awareness campaign, based on the findings of the advisory panel, to  
19 educate parents and health care providers about the causes and risk factors for autism  
20 and infant and toddler immune system disorders; and
- 21 e) Report to the Legislature about its findings.

22 SECTION 2. *Duration and Composition.*

23 a) The advisory panel shall meet for a two-year period, beginning on the effectivity of  
24 this Act, and shall consist of the following members:

- 25 (i) The Secretary of Health;

1           (ii) Two physicians with specialization in pediatrics or genetics, appointed by the  
2           Philippine Medical Association;

3           (iii) A geneticist appointed by the National Academy of Science and  
4           Technology

5           b) Members of the advisory panel will not be compensated for their service on the panel.

6           c) The Department of Health shall provide staff support to the advisory panel.

7           SECTION 3. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, decrees, orders, rules and regulations or parts  
8           thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended or modified  
9           accordingly.

10          SECTION 4. *Separability Clause.* – If, for any reason, any provision of this Act is  
11          declared to be unconstitutional or invalid, the other sections or provisions hereof which are not  
12          affected thereby shall continue to be in full force and effect.

13          SECTION 5. *Effectivity Clause.* – This Act shall take effect after fifteen (15) days  
14          following its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

15          Approved,