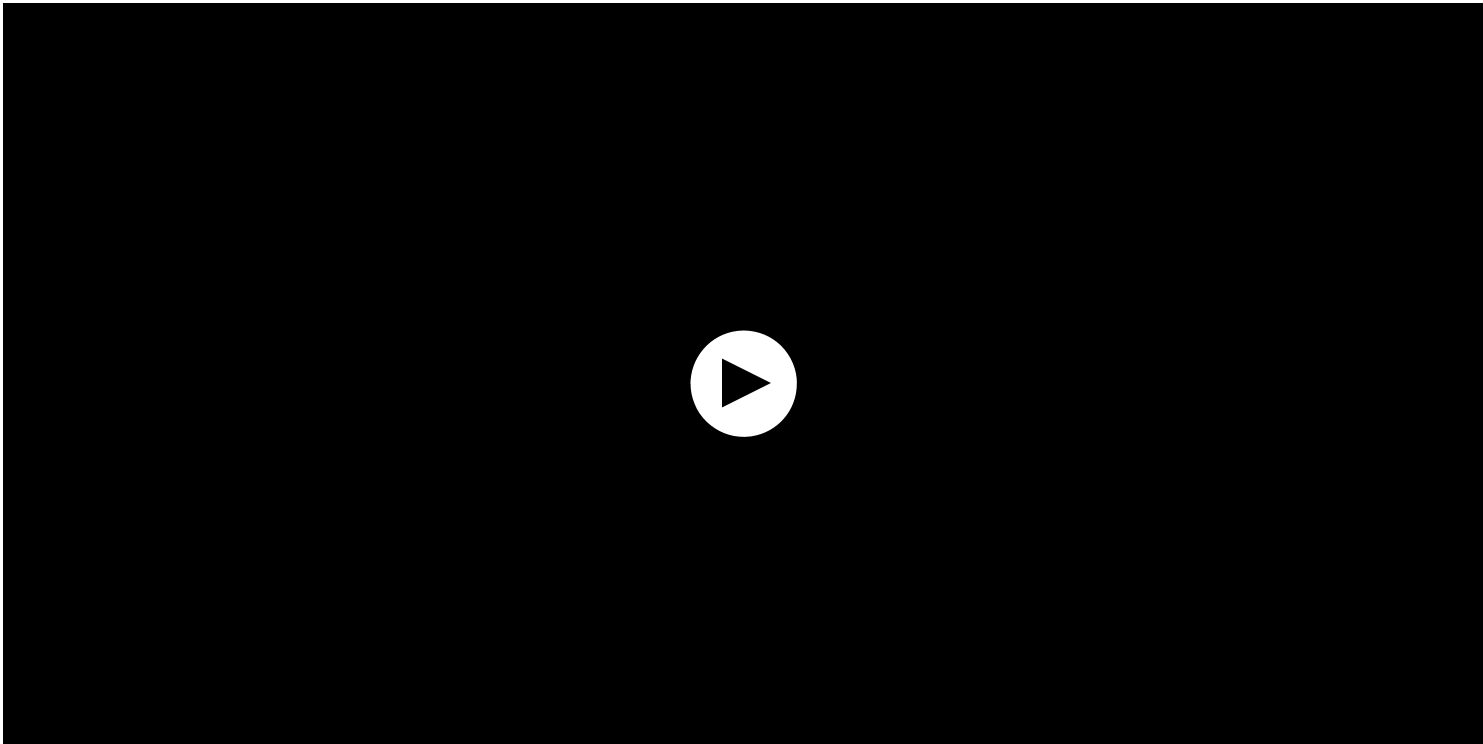


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Governor Ivey signs autism insurance bill into law

by Stephen Quinn
Friday, May 19th 2017



Alabama Governor Kay Ivey speaks with media after signing autism bill (abc3340.com)

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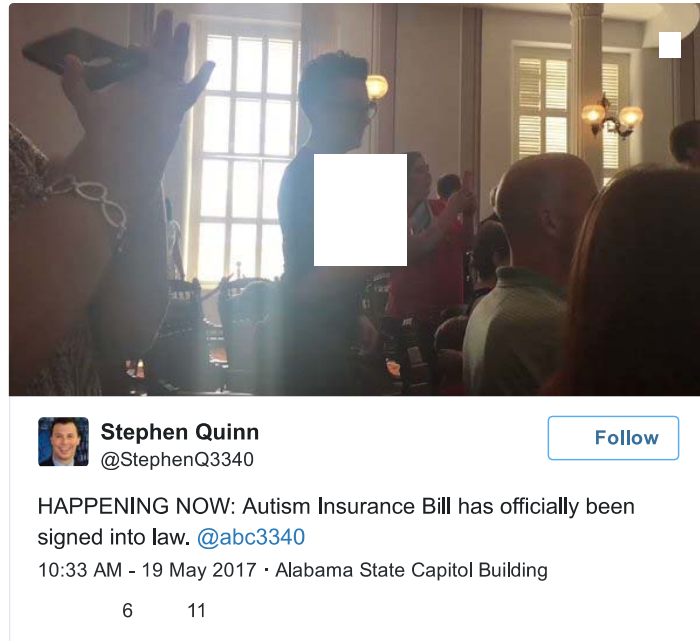
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MONTGOMERY, Ala. (WBMA) — Alabama Governor Kay Ivey signed H.B. 284 into law Friday, mandating insurance coverage of autism therapy for the first time for many of Alabama's children. Ivey was surrounded in the old House Chamber by autism advocates, parents, and state leaders who helped ensure the bill became law.



Stephen Quinn
@StephenQ3340

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Some parents watched the bill's signing on Facebook where the bill was closely monitored throughout its journey by parents across the state. "You can't help it, it's an emotional situation. These young children, they came up and hugged me. They don't know me but they want love and they're very expressive and...it's important social media was used in this for sure," said Ivey.

Just a week ago the fate of the bill was uncertain. (<http://abc3340.com/news/local/families-fill-state-house-ask-lawmakers-to-keep-moving-autism-insurance-bill-forward>) Some senators argued it would create an increase in insurance premiums and a burden on businesses too difficult to pass. Compromises were found after pressure continued to pour onto lawmakers. Insurance companies for example will only be mandated to provide autism therapy coverage until a child turns 18-years-old. "That's one of things we heard over and over again, that advocates are really there to listen and they responded in full force and we greatly appreciate their efforts," said Dr. Bama Hager of the Austim Society of Alabama.

Gov signs autism bill
Posted by ABC 33/40
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Sen. Cam Ward says he hopes to see age caps for coverage removed once the law takes full affect. Children who receive coverage from public plans such as Alabama's Medicaid Program and the Children Health Insurance Plan will receive coverage at the beginning 2019. "The fact that you had parents that would call you up literally choking back tears and crying, people were crying about this, they were so excited for their families because for so long this challenge has been on their families. It's a huge burden on any family both financially, emotionally, and mentally," said Ward.

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