

ASA Appears at Congressional Press Conference, Testifies at Senate Hearing *Monday, April 16, 2007* *By: Kate Ranta*

ASA Supports House's Expanding the Promise for Individuals with Autism Act of 2007, Provides Parent Perspective on Service Needs for Autism at Senate Hearing

On April 17, Congressmen Mike Doyle, Christopher Smith, Eliot Engel, and Chip Pickering introduced at a press conference the Expanding the Promise for Individuals with Autism Act of 2007. This critical legislation provides approximately \$350 million to improve access to comprehensive treatments, interventions, and services for individuals with autism and their families.

The proposed legislation aims to:

- . For the first time, convene a national task force to evaluate and report on evidence-based biomedical and behavioral treatments and services;
- . Establish State-based demonstration grant programs to provide evidence-based autism treatments, interventions, and services for children and adults;
- . Provide funding to protection and advocacy systems to address the needs of individuals with autism and other emerging populations of individuals with disabilities;
- . Fund expanded access to coordinated multi-agency treatments, interventions, and services to children; and
- . Provide supplemental grants for training and technical assistance to service providers and educators and to establish a national center on autism services information.

ASA President and CEO Lee Grossman, Jon Sheshtack (Autism Speaks), and Bradley Whitford (Autism Speaks/actor) were the featured speakers. Later in the day, ASA Director of Communications Marguerite Colston--who is also the mother of a 6-1/2 year old son with autism spectrum disorder--participated as a panelist to testify in front of the U.S. Senate's Appropriations Committee's Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies, about her experience as the parent of a child with autism on service needs in the autism community, calling for federal funding and leadership.

Subcommittee Co-chairs Sens. Tom Harkin (D-IA) and Arlen Specter (R-PA), called the hearing to discuss implementation of the Combating Autism Act. Colston, the only parent of a child with autism on the panel, was joined by Dr. Tom Insel (NIMH), Dr. Julie Gerberding (CDC), Bob Wright (Autism Speaks), Bradley Whitford (Autism Speaks/actor) and Judy Favell (American Psychological Association and ASA PPA member).