



For Immediate Release
December 5, 2006

House Passes Liberal Motion for National Autism Strategy

OTTAWA - The Official Opposition is celebrating a historic vote in the House of Commons, as Parliament has passed a Liberal motion calling on the Federal Government to develop a National Autism Strategy. The House of Commons passed the motion by a vote of 231-45.

Official Opposition Health Critic Dr. Ruby Dhalla says it is a positive example of working across partisan lines to help improve the lives of many thousands of Canadians.

“During the past several months, our party has talked with dozens of families across the country who have profoundly autistic children. We know that Applied Behavioral Analysis and other treatments can dramatically improve the social and intellectual functioning and thereby their quality of life. We call upon government to follow through with their support with the provision of funding,” said Dr. Dhalla.

Mr. Scott hopes the Minister of Health will put this on the agenda during the next federal-provincial-territorial ministers meeting so that persons with autism spectrum disorders will receive treatment and therapy for their condition and the associated costs will be covered by the health care insurance plan of every province.

Private Member’s Motion M-172 was advanced in May by the Honourable Andy Scott, M.P. for Fredericton. The four-point plan was debated for two hours and amended in cooperation with the Conservatives and the New Democrats.

“I wish to commend the grade 12 political science class of Leo Hayes High School in Fredericton led by teacher Greg Peters. The class consulted with myself and a number of people in helping develop this motion. These students have learned a tremendous amount in a very short period of time about parliamentary procedures, legislation and autism. They should be very proud about making a difference and having an influence on the process,” said Mr. Scott.

The motion calls upon government to advance a National Autism Strategy that includes:

(a) The development, in cooperation with provincial-territorial governments, of evidence based standards for the diagnosis and treatment of autism spectrum disorder;

(b) The development, in cooperation with provincial governments, of innovative funding methods for the care of those with autism spectrum disorder;

(c) Consulting with provincial-territorial governments and other stakeholders on the requirements of implementing a national surveillance program for autism spectrum disorder;

(d) The provision of additional federal funding for health research into autism spectrum disorder.

. -30-

For more information please contact:

Office of Dr. Ruby Dhalla, M.P.

Brampton-Springdale

Tel: 905 874 6868

Email: dhallr@parl.gc.ca