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Klein Marks First World Autism Day

Washington, DC – U.S. Representative Ron Klein (FL-22) today marked the first-ever World Autism day, designated to focus on the children and adults suffering from autism.

“Autism affects some 1.5 million Americans, and their courage in fighting this disease every day is to be commended,” Klein said. “We must focus more attention and research on autism, and we also must ensure that no family is ruined financially because they are caring for a loved one dealing with this disease.”

Klein expressed his support for a proposal by local, South Florida Democrats to require insurance companies to cover treatment for autistic children. Treatment and care for autistic children can cost thousands of dollars a month, a financial burden that can bring a family to the verge of bankruptcy.

Although more children will be diagnosed with autism this year than with AIDS, diabetes & cancer combined, autism receives less than 5% of the research funding of many less prevalent childhood diseases, according to the advocacy group Autism Speaks. There is currently no cure for autism.

World Autism Day was marked in Florida by Governor Charlie Crist and former Miami Dolphins star quarterback Dan Marino, who has an autistic son. The occasion was also marked around the world, as the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution asking all nations, U.N. bodies, international organizations and non-governmental groups to take steps to raise awareness of the disorder.

Klein has been a long-time supporter of Floridians living with autism. While a member of the Florida State Legislature, he fought for education programs as well as support for families of children living with autism.

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