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## Autism Funding News Conference with Representative Margaret O'Brien

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Margaret O'Brien News Conference – Autism Center  
President John M. Dunn  
June 20, 2014

- Good morning. Thank you all for being here with us. It IS a great day to be a Bronco.
- I'm John Dunn, president of Western Michigan University and it is my great privilege to welcome to our campus this morning three members of the Michigan Legislature. While they may not technically be Broncos by virtue of their academic history, these three are certainly an important part of our WMU family and we have long since recognized them as honorary Broncos.
- Joining us today are State Sen. Tonya Schuitmaker and State. Rep. Aric Nesbit. Welcome. It is always wonderful to have you both here on campus.
- And here to make a major announcement is State Rep. Margaret O'Brien. Rep. O'Brien, it is always wonderful to see you on campus as well. I would be remiss if, before introducing you I did not take just a moment to share with those here a little bit about your advocacy and determination that helped make this morning's announcement a reality.
- Without revealing the specifics of this morning's announcement, I do have to say that it involves an area of research and public service for which this University enjoys a national reputation. It is also an area that has increasingly caused concern among our state and nation's families and among educational and health professionals. And it involves a population that demands and deserves our commitment to ensure that a well-trained force of professionals is available to help realize their full potent.

- Rep. O'Brien has been steadfast in her support for what we do here. She is an advocate for putting the best resources of a research university to work to address the very real community challenge she learned about. She has our thanks. Without further ado, let's welcome Rep. Margaret O'Brien to the podium to fill you in on the details.

- **Rep. O'Brien.**

*Suggestions:*

*After Rep. O'Brien reveals the funding and scope of work, she takes questions--If none or if they are slow in coming. Dunn returns to the podium and notes that several of the principals in our work with autism are in the audience today.*

- **Dr. Stephanie Peterson**, professor and chair of the Department of Psychology and longtime behavior analysis specialist.

- **Dr. Wayne Fugua**, professor of Psychology and a member, by gubernatorial appointment, of the Michigan Autism Council.

- **Dr. Richard Malott**, professor of psychology who has worked for years to prepare students to become practitioners working in autism and organizational behavior management.

With them this morning are several of their community collaborators from Kalamazoo Community Mental Health, Residential Opportunities Inc., the Great Lakes Center for Autism Treatment and Research, KRESA and Woods Edge, the

Envision Center, the Michigan Autism Society, the Van Buren ISD and FBR Charter Schools.

- We have other psychology faculty members here as well and colleagues from the Department of Special Education and Literacy Studies--**Chair Dan Morgan and Professor Kristal Erhardt.**

- Some of the next generation of autism specialists--Department of Psychology graduate students are here with us as well. One, **Shawn Quigley**, will receive his Ph.D. next week and is heading to the New Mexico Medical Group's Development and Disability Center Autism Program as part of a two-year post-doctoral fellowship.

Dunn closes by telling media representatives there's an opportunity for them to speak further with any of the people involved in today's announcement.