

FLORIDA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

BILL ANALYSIS

This bill analysis was prepared by nonpartisan committee staff and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.

BILL #: [CS/HB 365](#)

TITLE: Law Enforcement Officer Interactions with Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder

SPONSOR(S): Valdés

COMPANION BILL: [SB 418](#) (Jones)

LINKED BILLS: None

RELATED BILLS: None

Committee References

[Criminal Justice](#)

15 Y, 0 N, As CS

[Government Operations](#)

[Budget](#)

[Judiciary](#)

SUMMARY

Effect of the Bill:

The bill directs the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles (DHSMV) to create a “blue envelope program” for the purpose of improving communication between individuals with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and law enforcement officers during motor vehicle stops. The bill requires DHSMV to develop and make available to individuals with ASD a blue envelope by January 1, 2027, which may contain specified identification documents for the individual to provide to a law enforcement officer during a traffic stop.

The bill also revises the current employment training component for law enforcement officers relating to individuals with ASD. The bill requires the new training component to include instruction in specified topics and techniques relating to interactions with individuals with ASD. Under the bill, the new training component must be completed in-person as part of the basic skills course required for a law enforcement officer to obtain initial certification, or online as part of the requirements for continued training or education of law enforcement officers, by July 1, 2030.

Fiscal or Economic Impact:

FDLE estimates that it will take approximately four months and \$64,000 to complete the necessary programmatic changes related to required continuing training for law enforcement officers interacting with individuals with ASD. DHSMV estimates that it will cost approximately \$66,000 to purchase materials and print and ship envelopes for the Blue Envelope Program.

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ANALYSIS

EFFECT OF THE BILL:

Blue Envelope Program

The bill directs the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles (DHSMV) to create a “blue envelope program” for the purpose of improving communication between individuals with [autism spectrum disorder](#) (ASD) and law enforcement officers during motor vehicle stops. By January 1, 2027, the bill requires DHSMV to develop and make available to individuals with ASD a blue envelope, which may be provided by the individual to a law enforcement officer during a motor vehicle stop, for the purpose of holding a copy of an individual’s:

- Driver license;
- Vehicle registration;
- Proof of insurance; and
- Emergency contact information. (Section [1](#))

Under the bill, the exterior of the blue envelope must identify the individual as an individual with ASD and include communication guidelines to assist law enforcement officers during interactions with drivers with ASD. The bill

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DATE: 2/12/2026

authorizes an individual with ASD to request a blue envelope from DHSMV or a tax collector's office beginning January 1, 2027. (Section [1](#))

Autism Spectrum Disorder Training

The bill amends [s. 943.1727, F.S.](#), which currently requires the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) to establish a continued [employment training component](#) relating to ASD, to instead require the [Criminal Justice Standards and Training Commission](#) (CJSTC) to establish an employment training component relating to individuals with ASD. Under the bill, completion of the training component continues to count toward the 40 hours of instruction for continued employment or appointment as a law enforcement officer required under [s. 943.135, F.S.](#) (Section [2](#))

The bill revises the requirements of the training to include in-person instruction for initial certification, and online instruction for continued employment training or education required under [s. 943.135\(1\), F.S.](#), in all of the following:

- The nature and manifestation of ASD.
- Techniques for interviewing or interrogating an individual with ASD, including techniques to ensure the legality of statements made by the individual and techniques used to protect the rights of the individual.
- Techniques for locating an individual with ASD who has run away and is in danger and for returning that individual while causing as little stress as possible to the individual.
- Techniques for recognizing the agency of an individual with ASD while identifying potential abusive or coercive situations.
- Techniques for de-escalating a potentially dangerous situation to maximize the safety of both the officer and the individual with ASD.
- Techniques for differentiating an individual with ASD from an individual who is belligerent, uncooperative, or otherwise displaying traits similar to the characteristics of an individual with ASD and for understanding the law as it relates to the use of the Baker Act on an individual with ASD.
- The impact of an interaction with officers on individuals with ASD.
- Information about the blue envelope program established by the bill and the ["SAFE" designation](#) included in the motor vehicle record pursuant to [s. 320.02\(15\), F.S.](#) (Section [2](#))

While the current training component relating to individuals with ASD is an elective continuing employment training component, the bill requires:

- Each basic skills course required for law enforcement officers to obtain initial certification required under [s. 943.13\(9\), F.S.](#), to incorporate such training by July 1, 2028, and authorizes such training component to be taught as part of other relevant training components.
- Each certified law enforcement officer to successfully complete such training as part of basic recruit training required under [s. 943.13\(9\), F.S.](#), or continued training or education required under [s. 943.135\(1\), F.S.](#), by July 1, 2030. (Section [2](#))

The bill provides the following definitions:

- "Agency" means the ability to make independent decisions and act in one's own best interests.
- "Autism spectrum disorder" has the same meaning as in [s. 627.6686\(2\), F.S.](#), to mean any of the following disorders as defined in the most recent edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders of the American Psychiatric Association:
 - Autistic disorder.
 - Asperger's syndrome.
 - Pervasive developmental disorder not otherwise specified. (Section [2](#))

The bill provides an effective date of July 1, 2026. (Section [3](#))

FISCAL OR ECONOMIC IMPACT:**STATE GOVERNMENT:**

FDLE estimates that it will take approximately four months and \$64,000 to complete the necessary programmatic changes related to required continuing training for law enforcement officers interacting with individuals with ASD.¹ DHSMV estimates that it will cost approximately \$66,000 to purchase materials and print and ship envelopes for the Blue Envelope Program.²

RELEVANT INFORMATION**SUBJECT OVERVIEW:****Autism Spectrum Disorder**

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a developmental disability caused by differences in the brain.³ People with ASD may behave, communicate, interact, and learn in ways that are different from most other people, and the abilities of people with ASD can vary significantly.⁴ Conditions such as anxiety, depression, or attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder occur more often in people with ASD than in people without ASD, and people with ASD may experience difficulty with communication and social interaction.⁵

Criminal Justice Standards and Training Commission

The Criminal Justice Standards and Training Commission (CJSTC) is established within the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) under [ss. 943.11](#) and [943.12, F.S.](#) CJSTC ensures that Florida's criminal justice officers are ethical, qualified, and well-trained, and is responsible for:

- Creating entry-level curricula and certification testing for criminal justice officers in Florida;
- Establishing minimum standards for employment and certification; and
- Revoking the certification of officers who fail to maintain these minimum standards of conduct.⁶

Section [943.13, F.S.](#), requires all law enforcement officer applicants to complete a CJSTC-approved basic recruit training program.⁷ After obtaining certification and as a condition of continued employment or appointment, [s. 943.135, F.S.](#), requires law enforcement officers to receive at least 40 hours of CJSTC-approved continued employment training every four years.

Continued Employment Training Related to ASD

Enacted in 2017, [s. 943.1727, F.S.](#), requires FDLE to establish an elective continued employment training component relating to ASD, as defined in [s. 627.6686\(2\), F.S.](#)⁸ The current training component:

- Must include, at a minimum, instruction on the recognition of the symptoms and characteristics of persons with autism spectrum disorder and appropriate responses to a person exhibiting such symptoms and characteristics.

¹ FDLE, Agency Analysis of 2026 House Bill 365, p. 4 (Dec. 2, 2025).

² DHSMV, Agency Analysis of 2026 House Bill 365, p. 6 (Nov. 7, 2025).

³ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *About Autism Spectrum Disorder*, <https://www.cdc.gov/autism/about/index.html> (last visited Feb. 12, 2026).

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ *Id.*

⁶ FDLE, Criminal Justice Professionalism Division, *Overview of the Professionalism Division*, <https://www.fdle.state.fl.us/CJSTC/Overview.aspx> (last visited Feb. 12, 2026).

⁷ [S. 943.13\(9\), F.S.](#)

⁸ ASD means any of the following disorders as defined in the most recent edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders of the American Psychiatric Association:

- Autistic disorder.
- Asperger's syndrome.
- Pervasive developmental disorder not otherwise specified.

- May be counted toward the 40 hours of instruction for continued employment or appointment as a law enforcement officer as required under [s. 943.135, F.S.](#)^{9,10}

SAFE Designation

According to the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles (DHSMV), people with a developmental disability in Florida can have a “D” designation placed on their driver’s license upon request. The “D” designation is voluntary and meant to inform law enforcement of the individual’s condition in case of a traffic stop or another incident. No fee is charged to have the “D” designation added to a driver license.¹¹

Under [s. 320.02\(15\), F.S.](#), a person who applies for motor vehicle registration in Florida may voluntarily indicate that he or she has been diagnosed with, or is the parent or legal guardian of a child or ward who has been diagnosed with, any of the following disabilities or disorders:

- *Autism.*
- Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.
- Down syndrome.
- Alzheimer’s disease.
- Traumatic brain injury.
- Posttraumatic stress disorder.
- Diabetes.
- An autoimmune disorder.
- Deafness.
- Blindness.
- Any other mentally or physically limiting disorder.

If an applicant indicates one or more of these diagnoses, DHSMV must include the designation “SAFE” in the motor vehicle record. DHSMV may not include in the motor vehicle record personal identifying information of, or any diagnosis of, a person for whom a diagnosis is indicated, and must allow a motor vehicle owner or co-owner to update a motor vehicle registration to include or remove the “SAFE” designation at any time.

⁹ The commission shall, by rule, adopt a program that requires all officers, as a condition of continued employment or appointment as officers, to receive periodic commission-approved continuing training or education. Such continuing training or education shall be required at the rate of 40 hours every four years. No officer shall be denied a reasonable opportunity by the employing agency to comply with this section. The employing agency must document that the continuing training or education is job-related and consistent with the needs of the employing agency. The employing agency must maintain and submit, or electronically transmit, the documentation to the commission, in a format approved by the commission. [S. 943.135, F.S.](#)

¹⁰ FDLE reports that currently, there is a 4-hour CJSTC Specialized Course, Autism Spectrum Disorder and Awareness, which is under revision and will be going to CJSTC for approval in May 2026. According to FDLE, the updated course covers all the topics outlined in the bill other than the blue envelope program, which has not been established. FDLE also notes that the Florida Law Enforcement Academy Basic Recruit Training Program (LEBRT) has a lesson on interacting with people with ASD that addresses some, but not all, of the requirements under the bill. The LEBRT program includes information on interviewing people with autism and responding to missing persons incidents involving people with autism. Additionally, FDLE offers two online courses related to autism that can be taken as part of an officer’s mandatory retraining, *Autism Awareness Telecommunicator* and *Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) and Interviews*, which can be counted toward mandatory retraining but are not developed by CJSTC. *Supra*, note 1 at p. 2.

¹¹ *Supra*, note 2 at p. 3.

RECENT LEGISLATION:

YEAR	BILL #/SUBJECT	HOUSE/SENATE SPONSOR(S)	OTHER INFORMATION
2024	CS/CS/HB 341 - Designation of a Diagnosis on Motor Vehicle Registrations	Salzman, Tant/ <i>Rodriguez</i>	Became law on May 6, 2024 and implementation began on October 1, 2024.

OTHER RESOURCES:

[Online Mandatory Retraining | FDLE](#)

[Blue Envelope Program | NPS-AID PROGRAM](#)

BILL HISTORY

COMMITTEE REFERENCE	ACTION	DATE	STAFF DIRECTOR/ POLICY CHIEF	ANALYSIS PREPARED BY
Criminal Justice Subcommittee	15 Y, 0 N, As CS	2/12/2026	Hall	Butcher
THE CHANGES ADOPTED BY THE COMMITTEE:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Required mandatory continued employment training related to autism to be offered online. Specified that each certified law enforcement officer must successfully complete specified training related to autism as part of his or her basic recruit training or continued employment training by July 1, 2030. Removed a requirement for the CJSTC to jointly develop specified trainings related to autism with organizations that advocate on behalf of individuals with autism. 			
Government Operations Subcommittee				
Budget Committee				
Judiciary Committee				

THIS BILL ANALYSIS HAS BEEN UPDATED TO INCORPORATE ALL OF THE CHANGES DESCRIBED ABOVE.
