

1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to law enforcement officer
3 interactions with individuals with autism spectrum
4 disorder; creating s. 320.021, F.S.; requiring the
5 Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles to
6 establish a program to improve communication between
7 individuals with autism spectrum disorder and law
8 enforcement officers under certain circumstances;
9 requiring the department to develop and make available
10 to individuals with autism spectrum disorder a certain
11 envelope and card by a specified date; providing
12 requirements for the envelope and card; authorizing
13 individuals with autism spectrum disorder to request
14 the envelope and card from the department or a tax
15 collector's office beginning on a specified date;
16 amending s. 943.1727, F.S.; defining the terms
17 "agency" and "autism spectrum disorder"; requiring the
18 Criminal Justice Standards and Training Commission
19 within the Department of Law Enforcement to establish
20 an employment training component relating to
21 individuals with autism spectrum disorder; providing
22 requirements for training law enforcement officers on
23 interacting with individuals with autism spectrum
24 disorder; requiring the training component to be
25 included in a specified course by a specified date;

26 requiring specified law enforcement officers to
 27 complete the training component by a specified date;
 28 providing an effective date.

30 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

31
 32 **Section 1. Section 320.021, Florida Statutes, is created**
 33 **to read:**

34 320.021 Blue envelope and blue card program.—

35 (1) The department shall establish a blue envelope and
 36 blue card program for the purpose of improving communication
 37 between individuals with autism spectrum disorder and law
 38 enforcement officers.

39 (2) (a) By January 1, 2027, the department shall develop
 40 and make available to individuals with autism spectrum disorder
 41 a blue envelope that is intended to hold a copy of an
 42 individual's driver license and his or her vehicle registration,
 43 proof of insurance, and emergency contact information, and a
 44 blue card, which envelope or card may be provided by an
 45 individual with autism spectrum disorder to a law enforcement
 46 officer during an interaction with the law enforcement officer.

47 (b) The exterior of the blue envelope must identify the
 48 individual as an individual with autism spectrum disorder and
 49 include communication guidelines intended to assist law
 50 enforcement officers during interactions with drivers with

51 autism spectrum disorder.

52 (c) The blue card may be digital or a durable, wallet-
53 sized card and must identify the individual as an individual
54 with autism spectrum disorder and include communication
55 guidelines intended to assist law enforcement officers during
56 interactions with individuals with autism spectrum disorder.

57 (3) Beginning January 1, 2027, an individual with autism
58 spectrum disorder may request a blue envelope, blue card, or
59 both a blue envelope and blue card from the department or a tax
60 collector's office.

61 **Section 2. Section 943.1727, Florida Statutes, is amended**
62 **to read:**

63 943.1727 ~~Continued~~ Employment training relating to autism
64 spectrum disorder.—

65 (1) As used in this section, the term:

66 (a) "Agency" means the ability to make independent
67 decisions and act in one's own best interests.

68 (b) "Autism spectrum disorder" has the same meaning as in
69 s. 627.6686(2).

70 (2) The commission department shall establish an a
71 ~~continued~~ employment training component relating to individuals
72 with autism spectrum disorder as defined in s. 627.6686. The
73 training component shall include, but need not be limited to,
74 instruction on the recognition of the symptoms and
75 characteristics of an individual on the autism disorder spectrum

76 ~~and appropriate responses to an individual exhibiting such~~
77 ~~symptoms and characteristics.~~ Completion of the training
78 component counts ~~may count~~ toward the 40 hours of instruction
79 for continued employment or appointment as a law enforcement
80 officer required under s. 943.135.

81 (3) The employment training component for law enforcement
82 officers which relates to interaction with individuals with
83 autism spectrum disorder must include in-person instruction for
84 initial certification and online instruction for continued
85 employment training or education required under s. 943.135(1) in
86 all of the following:

87 (a) The nature and manifestation of autism spectrum
88 disorder.

89 (b) Techniques for interviewing or interrogating an
90 individual with autism spectrum disorder, including techniques
91 to ensure the legality of statements made by the individual and
92 techniques used to protect the rights of the individual.

93 (c) Techniques for locating an individual with autism
94 spectrum disorder who has run away and is in danger and for
95 returning that individual while causing as little stress as
96 possible to the individual.

97 (d) Techniques for recognizing the agency of an individual
98 with autism spectrum disorder while identifying potential
99 abusive or coercive situations.

100 (e) Techniques for de-escalating a potentially dangerous

101 situation to maximize the safety of both the officer and the
102 individual with autism spectrum disorder.

103 (f) Techniques for differentiating an individual with
104 autism spectrum disorder from an individual who is belligerent,
105 uncooperative, or otherwise displaying traits similar to the
106 characteristics of an individual with autism spectrum disorder
107 and for understanding the law as it relates to the use of the
108 Baker Act on an individual with autism spectrum disorder.

109 (g) The impact of an interaction with officers on
110 individuals with autism spectrum disorder.

111 (h) Information about the blue envelope and blue card
112 program established under s. 320.021 and the "SAFE" designation
113 included in the motor vehicle record pursuant to s. 320.02(15).

114 (4) (a) By July 1, 2028, each basic skills course required
115 for law enforcement officers to obtain initial certification, as
116 required under s. 943.13(9), must incorporate such training
117 component. Such training component may be taught as part of
118 other relevant components of the training.

119 (b) Each certified law enforcement officer must
120 successfully complete such training component as part of the
121 basic recruit training required under s. 943.13(9) or as part of
122 continued training or education required under s. 943.135(1) by
123 July 1, 2030.

124 **Section 3.** This act shall take effect July 1, 2026.