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1
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.
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30 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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

34 320.021 Blue envelope and blue card program.—

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

39 (2) (a) By January 1, 2027, the department shall develop and
40 make available to individuals with autism spectrum disorder a
41 blue envelope that is intended to hold a copy of an individual's
42 driver license and his or her vehicle registration, proof of
43 insurance, and emergency contact information, and a blue card,
44 which envelope or card may be provided by an individual with
45 autism spectrum disorder to a law enforcement officer during an
46 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-sized
53 card and must identify the individual as an individual with
54 autism spectrum disorder and include communication guidelines
55 intended to assist law enforcement officers during interactions
56 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

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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

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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

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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.