

By Senator Jones

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A bill to be entitled
An act relating to law enforcement officer
interactions with individuals with autism spectrum
disorder; creating s. 320.021, F.S.; requiring the
Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles to
establish a program to improve communication between
individuals with autism spectrum disorder and law
enforcement officers under certain circumstances;
requiring the department to develop and make available
to individuals with autism spectrum disorder a certain
envelope by a specified date; providing requirements
for the envelope; authorizing persons with autism
spectrum disorder to request the envelope from the
department or a tax collector's office, beginning on a
specified date; amending s. 943.1727, F.S.; defining
the terms "agency" and "autism spectrum disorder";
requiring the Criminal Justice Standards and Training
Commission within the Department of Law Enforcement to
establish an employment training component relating to
individuals with autism spectrum disorder; requiring
that such employment training component be developed
jointly by the commission and an organization that
meets certain requirements; providing requirements for
training law enforcement officers on interacting with
individuals with autism spectrum disorder; requiring
the commission to adopt certain rules requiring such
training as part of basic recruit training and as part
of the required instruction for continued employment
and appointment as law enforcement officers; providing

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an effective date.

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

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

320.021 Blue envelope program.—

(1) The department shall establish a blue envelope program for the purpose of improving communication between individuals with autism spectrum disorder and law enforcement officers during motor vehicle-related interactions.

(2) By January 1, 2027, the department shall develop and make available to individuals with autism spectrum disorder a blue envelope that is intended to hold a copy of an individual's driver license and his or her vehicle registration, proof of insurance, and emergency contact information, which envelope may be provided by the individual to a law enforcement officer during a motor vehicle-related interaction. The exterior of the blue envelope must identify the individual as an individual with autism spectrum disorder and include communication guidelines intended to assist law enforcement officers during interactions with drivers with autism spectrum disorder.

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

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

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

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

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

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

(2) The ~~commission~~ ~~department~~ shall establish an a
continued employment training component relating to individuals
with autism spectrum disorder. Such training component must be
developed jointly by the commission and an organization that
advocates on behalf of, and offers training to law enforcement
officers in this state on interactions with, individuals with
autism spectrum disorder as defined in s. 627.6686. The training
component shall include, but need not be limited to, instruction
on the recognition of the symptoms and characteristics of an
individual on the autism disorder spectrum and appropriate
responses to an individual exhibiting such symptoms and
characteristics. Completion of the training component counts may
count ~~count~~ toward the 40 hours of instruction for continued
employment or appointment as a law enforcement officer required
under s. 943.135.

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

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

(b) Techniques for interviewing or interrogating an

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individual with autism spectrum disorder, including techniques to ensure the legality of statements made by the individual and techniques used to protect the rights of the individual.

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

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

(e) Techniques for de-escalating a potentially dangerous situation to maximize the safety of both the officer and the individual with autism spectrum disorder.

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

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

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

(4) All recruits must complete the employment training component relating to individuals with autism spectrum disorder. Such training component may be taught as part of other relevant components of the training.

(5) The commission shall by rule require that each law

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117 enforcement officer receive instruction in the techniques and
118 procedures described in subsection (3) as part of basic recruit
119 training and as part of the required instruction for continued
120 employment or appointment as such an officer.

121 (a) By July 1, 2028, each basic skills course required for
122 law enforcement officers to obtain initial certification, as
123 required under s. 943.13(9), must incorporate such training.

124 (b) By July 1, 2029, each law enforcement officer must
125 successfully complete such training, as required under s.
126 943.131(4) (a) and as part of continued training or education
127 required under s. 943.135(1).

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