

18A:26-2.8

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY CHECKLIST

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LAWS OF: 2007 **CHAPTER:** 171
NJSA: 18A:26-2.8 (Autism instruction and awareness for teachers)
BILL NO: A4055 (Substituted for S2558)

SPONSOR(S): Whelan and others

DATE INTRODUCED: February 26, 2007

COMMITTEE: **ASSEMBLY:** Health and Senior Services

SENATE: Education

AMENDED DURING PASSAGE: Yes

DATE OF PASSAGE: **ASSEMBLY:** June 21, 2007

SENATE: June 21, 2007

DATE OF APPROVAL: September 12, 2007

FOLLOWING ARE ATTACHED IF AVAILABLE:

[FINAL TEXT OF BILL](#) (Second reprint enacted)

A4055

[SPONSOR'S STATEMENT:](#) (Begins on page 3 of original bill) [Yes](#)

COMMITTEE STATEMENT: [ASSEMBLY:](#) [Yes](#)

[SENATE:](#) [Yes](#)

(Audio archived recordings of the committee meetings, corresponding to the date of the committee statement, *may possibly* be found at www.njleg.state.nj.us)

[FLOOR AMENDMENT STATEMENT:](#) [Yes](#)

LEGISLATIVE FISCAL ESTIMATE: No

S2558

[SPONSOR'S STATEMENT:](#) (Begins on page 3 of original bill) [Yes](#)

COMMITTEE STATEMENT: **ASSEMBLY:** No

[SENATE:](#) [Yes](#)

FLOOR AMENDMENT STATEMENT: No

LEGISLATIVE FISCAL ESTIMATE: No

VETO MESSAGE: No

[GOVERNOR'S PRESS RELEASE ON SIGNING:](#) [Yes](#)

FOLLOWING WERE PRINTED:

To check for circulating copies, contact New Jersey State Government Publications at the State Library (609) 278-2640 ext.103 or <mailto:refdesk@njstatelib.org>

REPORTS: No

HEARINGS: No

NEWSPAPER ARTICLES: Yes

"Gov. Corzine signs seven autism bills into law," Asbury Park Press, 9-13-07, p.A7

"New laws aim at fighting autism, improving services," Home News Tribune, 9-13-07, p.____

"Corzine OKs laws aimed at autism," Courier-Post, 9-13-07, p.____

"Corzine signs bills to bolster autism fight," The Star-Ledger, 9-13-07, p.22

"New Jersey gives \$4M boost to autism research," The Record, 9-13-07, p.A01

"New Jersey targets nation's highest autism rate," Burlington County Times, p.____

"State probes needs of autistic adults," Courier News, 9-13-07. p.____

P.L. 2007, CHAPTER 171, *approved September 12, 2007*
Assembly, No. 4055 (*Second Reprint*)

1 AN ACT concerning required instruction for teachers and
2 supplementing chapter 26 of Title 18A of the New Jersey
3 Statutes.

4
5 **BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State
6 of New Jersey:

7
8 1. ¹[a.]¹ Beginning with the 2008-2009 school year, ¹[a
9 candidate] a regionally-accredited institution of higher education
10 offering coursework¹ for a New Jersey instructional certificate shall
11 ¹[satisfactorily complete] incorporate the recommendations
12 developed by the Commissioner of Education pursuant to section 2
13 of this act on¹ instruction in autism ²and other developmental
14 disabilities² awareness and methods of teaching students with
15 autism ¹[at an accredited institution of higher education] ²and other
16 developmental disabilities² into existing course curriculum¹.

17 ¹[b. Beginning with the 2008-2009 school year, a person seeking
18 certification through the alternate route shall, within one year of
19 being employed, satisfactorily complete instruction in autism
20 awareness and methods of teaching students with autism at an
21 accredited institution of higher education.

22 c. All teachers not subject to the provisions of subsection a. or
23 b. of this section shall be required to pursue instruction in autism
24 awareness and methods of teaching students with autism by the
25 2009-2010 school year as part of the professional development
26 requirement established by the State Board of Education for
27 teaching staff members.]¹

28
29 2. ¹a.¹ The Commissioner of Education shall develop
30 recommendations for autism ²and other developmental disabilities²
31 awareness instruction and methods of teaching students with autism
32 ²and other developmental disabilities² for ¹[all]¹ teacher
33 preparation ¹[and professional development]¹ programs ¹in
34 accordance with section 1 of this act¹ and shall submit the
35 recommendations to the State Board of Education. In developing
36 the recommendations, the commissioner shall consult with the
37 Commissioner of Health and Senior Services ¹[and] ¹
38 representatives from ¹[agencies established to] entities that¹
39 promote ²[autism]² awareness ²about autism and other

EXPLANATION – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets [thus] in the above bill is not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined thus is new matter.

Matter enclosed in superscript numerals has been adopted as follows:

¹Assembly floor amendments adopted March 8, 2007.

²Senate SED committee amendments adopted June 7, 2007.

1 developmental disabilities² and provide programs and services to
2 people with autism ²and other developmental disabilities²,
3 including, but not limited to Autism Speaks, ~~['the]~~ The¹ Autism
4 Center ¹of New Jersey Medical School¹ at the University of
5 Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, and ~~['the]~~ The¹ New Jersey
6 Center for Outreach and Services for the Autism Community ¹, and
7 representatives of the education community, including, but not
8 limited to the New Jersey Education Association, the New Jersey
9 School Boards Association, the New Jersey Principals and
10 Supervisors Association, and the New Jersey Professional Teaching
11 Standards Board.

12 b. The Commissioner of Education shall develop
13 recommendations to incorporate autism ²and other developmental
14 disabilities² awareness ²instruction² and methods of teaching
15 students with autism ²and other developmental disabilities² for
16 teacher and paraprofessional in-service and other training programs,
17 where appropriate, and shall submit the recommendations to the
18 State board. In developing the recommendations, the commissioner
19 shall consult with the Commissioner of Health and Senior Services,
20 ~~2~~~~['representative]~~ representatives² from entities that promote
21 ~~2~~~~['autism]~~² awareness ²about autism and other developmental
22 disabilities² and provide programs and services to people with
23 autism ²and other developmental disabilities², including, but not
24 limited to Autism Speaks, The Autism Center of New Jersey
25 Medical School at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New
26 Jersey, and The New Jersey Center for Outreach and Services for
27 the Autism Community, and representatives of the education
28 community, including, but not limited to the New Jersey Education
29 Association, the New Jersey School Boards Association, the New
30 Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association, and the New Jersey
31 Professional Teaching Standards Board.

32 c. The recommendations developed by the commissioner
33 pursuant to subsections a. and b. of this section shall address the
34 following:

35 (1) characteristics of students with autism ²and other
36 developmental disabilities²;

37 (2) curriculum planning, curricular and instructional
38 modifications, adaptations, and specialized strategies and
39 techniques;

40 (3) assistive technology; and

41 (4) inclusive educational practices, including collaborative
42 partnerships¹.

43
44 3. The State Board of Education, based upon the
45 recommendations developed by the Commissioner of Education
46 pursuant to section 2 of this act, shall promulgate regulations

1 pursuant to the “Administrative Procedure Act,” P.L.1968, c.410
2 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.), ¹ [to determine the number of credit hours
3 necessary to satisfy the instructional requirements provided for in
4 section 1] necessary to implement the provisions¹ of this act.

5

6 4. This act shall take effect immediately.

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10

11 Provides for instruction in autism and other developmental
12 disabilities awareness and methods of teaching students with autism
13 and other developmental disabilities for candidates for teaching
14 certificates and current teachers and paraprofessionals.

ASSEMBLY, No. 4055

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

212th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED FEBRUARY 26, 2007

Sponsored by:

Assemblyman JIM WHELAN

District 2 (Atlantic)

Assemblywoman VALERIE VAINIERI HUTTLE

District 37 (Bergen)

Assemblywoman JOAN M. VOSS

District 38 (Bergen)

Assemblyman JOSEPH J. ROBERTS, JR.

District 5 (Camden and Gloucester)

Co-Sponsored by:

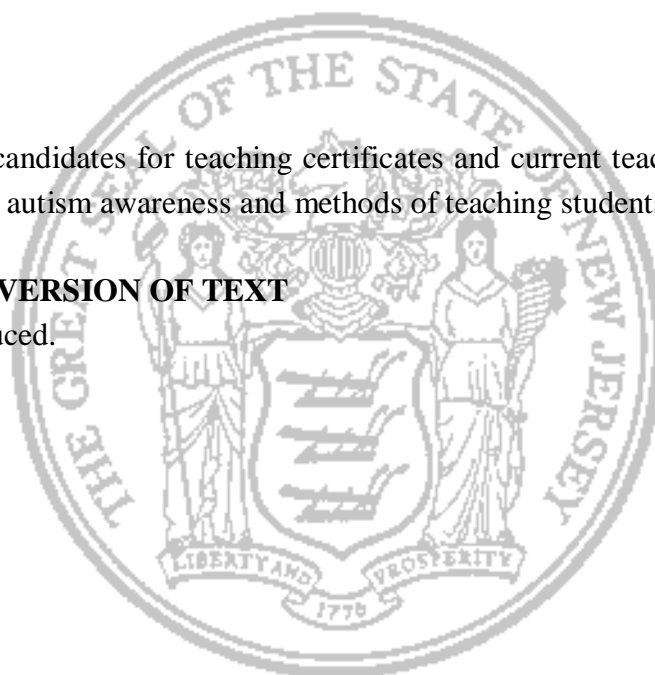
Assemblymen Schaer, Mayer, Assemblywoman Greenstein, Assemblymen McKeon, Epps, Assemblywoman Quigley, Assemblymen Gordon, Manzo, Munoz, Scalera, Greenwald, Assemblywoman Cruz-Perez and Assemblyman Vas

SYNOPSIS

Requires candidates for teaching certificates and current teachers to receive instruction in autism awareness and methods of teaching students with autism.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 3/9/2007)

1 AN ACT concerning required instruction for teachers and
2 supplementing chapter 26 of Title 18A of the New Jersey
3 Statutes.

4
5 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*
6 *of New Jersey:*

7
8 1. a. Beginning with the 2008-2009 school year, a candidate
9 for a New Jersey instructional certificate shall satisfactorily
10 complete instruction in autism awareness and methods of teaching
11 students with autism at an accredited institution of higher education.

12 b. Beginning with the 2008-2009 school year, a person seeking
13 certification through the alternate route shall, within one year of
14 being employed, satisfactorily complete instruction in autism
15 awareness and methods of teaching students with autism at an
16 accredited institution of higher education.

17 c. All teachers not subject to the provisions of subsection a. or
18 b. of this section shall be required to pursue instruction in autism
19 awareness and methods of teaching students with autism by the
20 2009-2010 school year as part of the professional development
21 requirement established by the State Board of Education for
22 teaching staff members.

23
24 2. The Commissioner of Education shall develop
25 recommendations for autism awareness instruction and methods of
26 teaching students with autism for all teacher preparation and
27 professional development programs and shall submit the
28 recommendations to the State Board of Education. In developing
29 the recommendations, the commissioner shall consult with the
30 Commissioner of Health and Senior Services and representatives
31 from agencies established to promote autism awareness and provide
32 programs and services to people with autism, including, but not
33 limited to Autism Speaks, the Autism Center at the University of
34 Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, and the New Jersey Center
35 for Outreach and Services for the Autism Community.

36
37 3. The State Board of Education, based upon the
38 recommendations developed by the Commissioner of Education
39 pursuant to section 2 of this act, shall promulgate regulations
40 pursuant to the "Administrative Procedure Act," P.L.1968, c.410
41 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.), to determine the number of credit hours
42 necessary to satisfy the instructional requirements provided for in
43 section 1 of this act.

44
45 4. This act shall take effect immediately.

STATEMENT

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This bill requires candidates for teaching certificates and current teachers to receive instruction in autism awareness and methods of teaching students with autism. Under the bill, beginning with the 2008-2009 school year, candidates for New Jersey instructional certificates and anyone seeking certification through the alternate route will be required to satisfactorily complete the instruction at an accredited institution of higher education. A candidate seeking certification through the alternate route must satisfactorily complete the instruction within one year of being employed. Current teachers will be required to pursue such instruction by the 2009-2010 school year as part of the professional development requirement established by the State Board of Education for teaching staff members.

Under the bill, the Commissioner of Education will develop recommendations for the instruction for all teacher preparation and professional development programs and submit the recommendations to the State Board of Education. In developing the recommendations, the commissioner will consult with the Commissioner of Health and Senior Services and representatives from certain agencies that promote autism awareness and provide programs and services for people with autism.

The bill also requires the State Board of Education to promulgate regulations, based upon the commissioner's recommendations, to determine the number of credit hours necessary to satisfy any instructional requirements.

ASSEMBLY HEALTH AND SENIOR SERVICES COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY, No. 4055

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: MARCH 5, 2007

The Assembly Health and Senior Services Committee reports favorably Assembly Bill No. 4055.

This bill requires candidates for teaching certificates and current teachers to receive instruction in autism awareness and methods of teaching students with autism.

The bill provides specifically as follows:

- Beginning with the 2008-2009 school year, candidates for New Jersey instructional certificates and anyone seeking certification through the alternate route are to satisfactorily complete the instruction at an accredited institution of higher education.
- A candidate seeking certification through the alternate route is to satisfactorily complete the instruction within one year of being employed.
- Current teachers are to pursue such instruction by the 2009-2010 school year as part of the professional development requirement established by the State Board of Education for teaching staff members.
- The Commissioner of Education is to develop recommendations for autism awareness instruction and methods of teaching students with autism for all teacher preparation and professional development programs and submit the recommendations to the State Board of Education. In developing the recommendations, the commissioner is to consult with the Commissioner of Health and Senior Services and representatives from entities that promote autism awareness and provide programs and services for people with autism.
- The State Board of Education is to promulgate regulations, based upon the recommendations developed by the commissioner, to determine the number of credit hours necessary to satisfy the instructional requirements provided for in the bill.

As reported by the committee, this bill is identical to Senate Bill No. 2558 (Weinberg/Karcher), which is currently pending in the Senate Health, Human Services and Senior Citizens Committee.

SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

[First Reprint]

ASSEMBLY, No. 4055

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: JUNE 7, 2007

The Senate Education Committee reports favorably Assembly Bill No. 4055 (1R) with committee amendments.

As amended, this bill provides for instruction in autism and other developmental disabilities awareness and methods of teaching students with autism and other developmental disabilities for candidates for teaching certificates and current teachers and paraprofessionals. Under the bill, the Commissioner of Education would develop recommendations for (1) autism and other developmental disabilities awareness instruction and methods of teaching students with autism and other developmental disabilities for teacher preparation programs and (2) incorporating autism and other developmental disabilities awareness and methods of teaching students with autism and other developmental disabilities into teacher and paraprofessional in-service and other training programs. The recommendations would address: the characteristics of students with autism and other developmental disabilities; curriculum planning, curricular and instructional modifications, adaptations, and specialized strategies and techniques; assistive technology; and inclusive educational practices, including collaborative partnerships.

In developing the recommendations, the commissioner would be required to consult with the Commissioner of Health and Senior Services, representatives from entities that promote awareness about autism and other developmental disabilities and provide programs and services to people with autism and other developmental disabilities including, but not limited to, Autism Speaks, The Autism Center of New Jersey Medical School at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, The New Jersey Center for Outreach and Services for the Autism Community, and representatives of the educational community including, but not limited to, the New Jersey Education Association, the New Jersey School Boards Association, the New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association, and the New Jersey Professional Teaching Standards Board. Beginning with the 2008-2009 school year, regionally-accredited institutions of higher

education offering coursework for a New Jersey instructional certificate would be required to incorporate the commissioner's recommendations into existing course curriculum.

The bill requires the commissioner to submit the recommendations to the State Board of Education. The State board would be required to promulgate regulations necessary to implement the bill's provisions.

The committee amended the bill to add other developmental disabilities to the bill's provisions.

As reported by committee, this bill is identical to Senate Bill No. 2558 with committee amendments.

STATEMENT TO
ASSEMBLY, No. 4055

with Assembly Floor Amendments
(Proposed By Assemblyman WHELAN)

ADOPTED: MARCH 8, 2007

These floor amendments clarify that the instruction on autism awareness and methods of teaching students with autism will be incorporated into existing course curriculum in teacher preparation programs offered by institutions of higher education. The instruction will be in accordance with recommendations developed by the Commissioner of Education. The amendments provide that in developing the recommendations, in addition to the entities engaged in promoting autism awareness that are included in the original bill, the commissioner will consult with members of the education community including the New Jersey Education Association, the New Jersey School Boards Association, the New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association, and the New Jersey Professional Teaching Standards Board. The amendments also provide that the commissioner will develop recommendations to incorporate autism awareness and methods of teaching students with autism for teacher and paraprofessional in-service and other training opportunities. In developing those recommendations, the commissioner will consult with the same autism awareness and education organizations. Under the amendments, alternate route teachers will receive the instruction as part of in-service or other training opportunities.

SENATE, No. 2558

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 212th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED FEBRUARY 26, 2007

Sponsored by:

Senator LORETTA WEINBERG

District 37 (Bergen)

Senator ELLEN KARCHER

District 12 (Mercer and Monmouth)

Co-Sponsored by:

Senators Coniglio and Ciesla

SYNOPSIS

Requires candidates for teaching certificates and current teachers to receive instruction in autism awareness and methods of teaching students with autism.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 3/13/2007)

1 AN ACT concerning required instruction for teachers and
2 supplementing chapter 26 of Title 18A of the New Jersey
3 Statutes.

4

5 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*
6 *of New Jersey:*

7

8 1. a. Beginning with the 2008-2009 school year, a candidate
9 for a New Jersey instructional certificate shall satisfactorily
10 complete instruction in autism awareness and methods of teaching
11 students with autism at an accredited institution of higher education.

12 b. Beginning with the 2008-2009 school year, a person seeking
13 certification through the alternate route shall, within one year of
14 being employed, satisfactorily complete instruction in autism
15 awareness and methods of teaching students with autism at an
16 accredited institution of higher education.

17 c. All teachers not subject to the provisions of subsection a. or
18 b. of this section shall be required to pursue instruction in autism
19 awareness and methods of teaching students with autism by the
20 2009-2010 school year as part of the professional development
21 requirement established by the State Board of Education for
22 teaching staff members.

23

24 2. The Commissioner of Education shall develop
25 recommendations for autism awareness instruction and methods of
26 teaching students with autism for all teacher preparation and
27 professional development programs and shall submit the
28 recommendations to the State Board of Education. In developing
29 the recommendations, the commissioner shall consult with the
30 Commissioner of Health and Senior Services and representatives
31 from agencies established to promote autism awareness and provide
32 programs and services to people with autism, including, but not
33 limited to Autism Speaks, the Autism Center at the University of
34 Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, and the New Jersey Center
35 for Outreach and Services for the Autism Community.

36

37 3. The State Board of Education, based upon the
38 recommendations developed by the Commissioner of Education
39 pursuant to section 2 of this act, shall promulgate regulations
40 pursuant to the "Administrative Procedure Act," P.L.1968, c.410
41 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.), to determine the number of credit hours
42 necessary to satisfy the instructional requirements provided for in
43 section 1 of this act.

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45 4. This act shall take effect immediately.

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STATEMENT

This bill requires candidates for teaching certificates and current teachers to receive instruction in autism awareness and methods of teaching students with autism. Under the bill, beginning with the 2008-2009 school year, candidates for New Jersey instructional certificates and anyone seeking certification through the alternate route will be required to satisfactorily complete the instruction at an accredited institution of higher education. A candidate seeking certification through the alternate route must satisfactorily complete the instruction within one year of being employed. Current teachers will be required to pursue such instruction by the 2009-2010 school year as part of the professional development requirement established by the State Board of Education for teaching staff members.

Under the bill, the Commissioner of Education will develop recommendations for the instruction for all teacher preparation and professional development programs and submit the recommendations to the State Board of Education. In developing the recommendations, the commissioner will consult with the Commissioner of Health and Senior Services and representatives from certain agencies that promote autism awareness and provide programs and services for people with autism.

The bill also requires the State Board of Education to promulgate regulations, based upon the commissioner's recommendations, to determine the number of credit hours necessary to satisfy any instructional requirements.

SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

SENATE, No. 2558

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: JUNE 7, 2007

The Senate Education Committee favorably reports Senate Bill No. 2558 with committee amendments.

As amended, this bill provides for instruction in autism and other developmental disabilities awareness and methods of teaching students with autism and other developmental disabilities for candidates for teaching certificates and current teachers and paraprofessionals. Under the bill, the Commissioner of Education would develop recommendations for (1) autism and other developmental disabilities awareness instruction and methods of teaching students with autism and other developmental disabilities for teacher preparation programs and (2) incorporating autism and other developmental disabilities awareness and methods of teaching students with autism and other developmental disabilities into teacher and paraprofessional in-service and other training programs. The recommendations would address: the characteristics of students with autism and other developmental disabilities; curriculum planning, curricular and instructional modifications, adaptations, and specialized strategies and techniques; assistive technology; and inclusive educational practices, including collaborative partnerships.

In developing the recommendations, the commissioner would be required to consult with the Commissioner of Health and Senior Services, representatives from entities that promote awareness about autism and other developmental disabilities and provide programs and services to people with autism and other developmental disabilities including, but not limited to, Autism Speaks, The Autism Center of New Jersey Medical School at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, The New Jersey Center for Outreach and Services for the Autism Community, and representatives of the educational community including, but not limited to, the New Jersey Education Association, the New Jersey School Boards Association, the New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association, and the New Jersey Professional Teaching Standards Board. Beginning with the 2008-2009 school year, regionally-accredited institutions of higher education offering coursework for a New Jersey instructional

certificate would be required to incorporate the commissioner's recommendations into existing course curriculum.

The bill requires the commissioner to submit the recommendations to the State Board of Education. The State board would be required to promulgate regulations necessary to implement the bill's provisions.

The committee amended the bill to add other developmental disabilities to the bill's provisions. As introduced, the bill addressed only autism. The committee also amended the bill to clarify that the instruction would be incorporated into existing course curriculum in teacher preparation programs offered by the institutions, and that the instruction would be in accordance with recommendations developed by the Commissioner of Education. The amendments also add members of the education community to the list of entities with which the commissioner would be required to consult in developing recommendations.

The committee also amended the bill to require the commissioner to develop recommendations to incorporate autism and other developmental disabilities awareness and methods of teaching those students into teacher and paraprofessional in-service and other training opportunities. In developing those recommendations, the commissioner would consult with the same organizations as required for the recommendations for teacher preparation programs. Under the amendments, alternate route teachers would receive the instruction as part of in-service or other training opportunities.

As reported by committee, this bill is identical to Assembly Bill No. 4055 (1R) as amended by the committee.

Title

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- [Home](#)
- [About the Governor](#)
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- [News Room](#)
- [Press Releases](#)
- [Press Archives](#)
- [Event Photos](#)
- [Video Clips](#)
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- [Newsletters](#)
- [Speeches](#)
- [Reports](#)
- [Executive Orders/Resolutions](#)
- [Kids Site](#)
- [Governor's Internship Program](#)
- [Boards, Authorities and Commissions](#)

[Home](#) > [News Room](#) > [Press Releases](#) > Sep-12-07 Governor Corzine Signs Bills On Autism
Sep-12-07 Governor Corzine Signs Bills On Autism

NEWS RELEASE

Governor Jon S. Corzine
September 12, 2007

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Press Office
609-777-2600

GOVERNOR CORZINE SIGNS BILLS ON AUTISM

West Windsor - Governor Jon S. Corzine today signed a package of seven bills relating to autism spectrum disorders. These disorders are often characterized by substantial impairments in social interaction and communication and the presence of unusual behaviors and interests.

“Today, we are enhancing New Jersey’s pioneer status in the fight against autism spectrum disorders by bolstering our arsenal of programs, training, education, and research,” said Governor Jon S. Corzine. “This is an opportunity for New Jersey to become a model for other states in researching the nature of autism and its causes as well as in treating those with these disorders.

“More importantly, through these initiatives, we will be enabling those impacted by autism spectrum disorders to function as independent, productive, and empowered individuals.”

The rate and diagnosis of autism spectrum disorders in New Jersey is disproportionately high. While experts estimate the national rate has increased to about 1 in 150 children, the incidence in New Jersey is approximately 1 in 95.

“With new studies showing New Jersey with the highest reported autism rates in the country, it is critically important that the state do all it can to help the growing number of individuals and families confronting autism spectrum

disorders,” said Assembly Speaker Joseph J. Roberts, Jr. (D-Camden) who championed the legislative effort to improve the detection, treatment and awareness of autism in New Jersey.

“For families whose loved ones are locked in the grasp of this disorder, today’s action sends a reassuring message of hope that New Jersey is working to do more to improve its safety net of services and care,” Roberts said. “These measures will enable New Jersey to address the startling number of children being diagnosed with autism and they will allow us to extend a helping hand to countless autistic young adults and others who have aged out of the state’s special education system.”

“A diagnosis of autism or developmental disability presents real challenges for parents and caregivers,” said Senator Ellen Karcher (D-Mercer/Monmouth). “While the medical community seeks to find answers to the causes of autism and developmental disability, states have an obligation to promote programs which help those living with the disability. These new lifesaving laws will help families deal with the hardships of caring for individuals with autism.”

“According to federal statistics, New Jersey has the highest number of autism cases in the nation,” said Senator Loretta Weinberg, (D-Bergen). “We are still learning about the autism spectrum disorders, but while we are learning, we must be able to provide much-needed assistance to families living with autism. As the number of residents living with autism increases, we must have the resources in place to provide them with support programs and work to find ways to decrease the incidence of autism in New Jersey.”

The Governor signed A4055/S2558, providing for teacher training in awareness and instruction methods for students with autism and other developmental disabilities for candidates for teaching certificates, current teachers and paraprofessionals. The Commissioner of Education will develop recommendations to address a variety of issues including the characteristics of students with autism and other developmental disabilities; curriculum planning, assistive technology; and inclusive educational practices.

“In a state with high autism rates, it’s imperative that educators have the tools to recognize autism and help children with this confounding disorder,” said Assemblyman Jim Whelan (D-Atlantic), a veteran teacher with a master’s in education. “Teachers are an untapped resource in this state’s growing efforts to help children and adults with autism.”

Other primary bill sponsors in the Assembly were: Assemblywoman Valerie Vainieri Huttle (District 37) and Assemblywoman Joan Voss (District 38). Primary Senate sponsors were: Senator Loretta Weinberg (District 37) and Senator Ellen Karcher (District 12).

Governor Corzine also signed A4056/S2568, requiring the Early Intervention Program in the Department of Health and Senior Services to address the specific needs of children with autism spectrum disorders and their families. These activities involve developing guidelines for health care professionals to use in evaluating infants and toddlers for autism, ensuring the timely referral by health care professionals of infants and toddlers suspected of being on the autism spectrum to the Early Intervention Program and collecting data on statewide autism screening, diagnosis, and intervention programs and systems.

“By establishing comprehensive guidelines for New Jersey pediatricians to use in the evaluation and referral of autistic children, we can ensure appropriate treatment for infants and toddlers as soon as possible,” said Assemblyman Herb Conaway, M.D. (D-Burlington/Camden). “For autistic children, early detection is the key to ensuring proper care.”

Other primary bill sponsors in the Assembly were: Assemblyman Michael Panter (District 12); Assemblywoman Valerie Vainieri Huttle (District 37) and Assemblyman Lou Greenwald (District 6). Primary Senate sponsors were: Senator Loretta Weinberg (District 37) and Senator Ellen Karcher (District 12)

Governor Corzine signed A4057/S2559, establishing the New Jersey Adults with Autism Task Force in the Department of Human Services (DHS). The purpose of the task force is to study, evaluate, and develop recommendations relating to specific actionable measures to support and meet the needs of adults with autism. These include job training and placement, housing, and long-term care.

“New Jersey faces new challenges created by the rise in adults classified with autism including the need for job training

and placement, housing and long-term care,” said Assemblyman Gary Schaer (D-Passaic/Bergen/Essex). “It’s critical that we strengthen the community of support for adults living with this lifelong disease.”

Other primary Assembly sponsors were: Assemblywoman Joan Voss (District 38) and Assemblyman John McKeon (District 27). Primary sponsors in the Senate were: Senator Loretta Weinberg (District 37) and Senator Ellen Karcher (District 12).

In addition, Governor Corzine signed S/698A4054, which makes changes to the Governor's Council for Medical Research and Treatment of Infantile Autism, renaming it the Governor's Council for Medical Research and Treatment of Autism.

“There are going to be new challenges created by a growing number of adults who are being classified with autism,” said Assemblywoman Joan Voss (D-Bergen). “The numbers clearly indicate that we need to step up our efforts to help the thousands of families in this state that have loved ones with autism disorders.”

Other primary sponsors in the Assembly were: Assemblyman Gary Schaer (District 36); and Assemblyman John McKeon (District 27). Primary sponsors in the Senate were: Senator Loretta Weinberg (District 37) and Senator Joe Vitale (District 19).

Governor Corzine signed A4059/S2569, extending funding for autism medical research and treatment. The bill eliminates the five-year “sunset” for the \$1 surcharge established under P.L.2003, c.144 for each motor vehicle fine and penalty imposed by the court, which is deposited in the “Autism Medical Research and Treatment Fund.” The fund provides the financial support funding for the grant and contract awards of the Governor’s Council for Medical Research and Treatment of Autism.

“More than ever, New Jersey needs to muster more attention and resources to help families, school districts, communities, and health care providers deal with the challenge of rising autism diagnosis rates,” said Assemblyman David Mayer (D-Gloucester/Camden).

Other primary Assembly sponsors were: Assemblywoman Joan Voss (District 38); Assemblyman Jim Whelan (District 2) and Assemblyman Lou Greenwald (District 6). Primary Senate sponsors were Senator Loretta Weinberg (District 37) and Senator Joseph Coniglio (District 38).

The Governor also signed A2306/S2723 requiring the Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS) to maintain a registry of reported autism diagnoses. The DHSS, in consultation with the Department of Human Services, will maintain an up-to-date registry to include a record of all reported cases of autism that occur in New Jersey; each reported case of autism in which the initial diagnosis is changed, lost, or considered misdiagnosed; and any other information DHSS deems relevant and appropriate to conduct thorough and complete epidemiologic surveys of autism, to enable analysis of this problem, and to plan for and provide services to children with autism and their families.

“New Jersey has the nation’s highest reported rates of autism and this presents new challenges for families, schools and our state’s health-care network,” said John Assemblyman McKeon (D-Essex). “This registry will serve as an invaluable tool for the state to monitor autism cases while ensuring that New Jersey continues to provide services to meet the needs of the state’s growing autism community.”

Other primary bill sponsors in the Assembly were Assemblyman Nelson Albano (District 1) and Assemblywoman Joan Voss (District 38). Primary sponsors in the Senate were: Senator Andrew Ciesla (District 10) and Senator Diane Allen (District 7).

Governor Corzine also signed A2291/S690, which establishes an Asperger's Syndrome Pilot Initiative in the Department of Human Services. The initiative will provide vocational, educational and social training services to persons with Asperger's Syndrome. This will be accomplished through community-based service sites which offer appropriate support; guidance and education that will enable these individuals to further their education achieve gainful employment and become broadly competent adults who are able to lead fulfilling lives.

“Asperger’s Syndrome was only recognized in the United States in 1994, 60 years after many European countries confirmed its existence,” said Assemblywoman Joan Voss (D-Bergen), whose adult son has Asperger’s. “There are so many adults and young adults who were misdiagnosed over the years because there wasn’t a correct diagnosis for what was troubling them and there were no programs to meet their needs. This pilot program will be a model to help people with Asperger's acquire the socialization skills they need so they can enjoy productive and happy lives.”

Other primary bill sponsors in the Assembly were: Assemblyman Robert Gordon (District 38) and Assemblyman Eric Munoz (District 21). Primary sponsors in the Senate were: Senator Loretta Weinberg (District 37) and Senator Ellen Karcher (District 12).

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