

**HOUSE . . . . . No. 4811**

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**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

PRESENTED BY:

**Katherine Clark (BY REQUEST)**

*To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:*

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the passage of the accompanying bill:

An Act relative to the criminal justice training regarding persons with an autism spectrum disorder. .

PETITION OF:

NAME:

Lydia Marie XinZhen Brown

DISTRICT/ADDRESS:

51 School Street  
Melrose, MA 02176

# The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the Year Two Thousand and Nine

An Act relative to the criminal justice training regarding persons with an autism spectrum disorder. .

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:*

1 Section 116 of Chapter 6 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2008 Official edition,  
2 is  
3 hereby amended by inserting the following section after Section 116E:—  
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5

6 Section 116F:

7  
8 (Subsection A) The municipal police training committee shall establish within the recruit basic  
9 training curriculum a course for regional and municipal police training schools on or before  
10 January first, two thousand and thirteen for the training of law enforcement officers and  
11 correction officers in the commonwealth in appropriate interactions with persons an autism  
12 spectrum disorder, and also shall develop guidelines for law enforcement response to individuals  
13 with an autism spectrum disorder who are victims or witnesses to crime, or suspected or  
14 convicted of crime.  
15

16 The course of instruction and the guidelines shall stress positive responses to such individuals,  
17 de-escalating potentially dangerous situations, understanding of the different manner in which  
18 such individuals process sensory stimuli and language, and appropriate methods of interrogation.  
19 Where appropriate, the training presenters shall include experts on autism spectrum disorders  
20 who also have expertise in the law enforcement or corrections field.  
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22 As used in this section, “law enforcement officer” shall mean any officer of a local police  
23 department, capital and state police, and “correction officer” shall mean any officer tasked with  
24 the custody, care, or transport of incarcerated or detained persons. As used in this section,  
25 “autism spectrum disorder” shall mean a disability on the autism spectrum, which includes  
26 autistic disorder, Asperger's disorder, pervasive developmental disorder not otherwise specified,  
27 childhood disintegrative disorder, or Rhetts Syndrome, as defined in the most recent edition of  
28 the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of the American Psychiatric Association.

29

30 (Subsection B) The course of basic training for law enforcement officers and correction officers  
31 shall, no later than January first, two thousand and thirteen, include at least ten hours of  
32 instruction in the procedures and techniques described below:

- 33 (aa) The nature and manifestations of autism spectrum disorders.
- 34 (bb) Appropriate techniques for interviewing or interrogating an individual with an  
35 autism spectrum disorder, including techniques to ensure legality of statements made, and  
36 techniques to protect the rights of the interviewee.
- 37 (cc) Techniques for locating an individual with an autism spectrum disorder who runs  
38 away, and returning said individual while causing as little stress as possible to him or her.
- 39 (dd) The legal duties imposed on police officers to offer protection and assistance,  
40 including guidelines for making felony and misdemeanor arrests, and appropriate techniques for  
41 arrest and restraint on an individual with an autism spectrum disorder.
- 42 (ee) Techniques for de-escalating a potentially dangerous situation to maximize the safety  
43 of both the law enforcement officer or correction officer and the individual with an autism  
44 spectrum disorder.
- 45 (ff) Techniques for differentiating between an individual with an autism spectrum  
46 disorder from an individual who is belligerent, uncooperative, or otherwise displaying traits  
47 similar to the characteristics of an individual with an autism spectrum spectrum disorder.
- 48 (gg) Procedures to ensure the safety and wellbeing of individuals with an autism  
49 spectrum disorder in a correctional facility.
- 50 (hh) The impact of interaction with law enforcement officers or correction officers on  
51 individuals with an autism spectrum disorder.

52  
53 (Subsection C) All law enforcement recruits shall receive the course of basic training for law  
54 enforcement officers, established in subsections (A) and (B), as part of their required  
55 certification process.

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57 (Subsection D) The course of basic training for law enforcement officers shall be taught as part  
58 of the crisis intervention and conflict resolution components of the recruit academy training, so  
59 that there will not be an increase in the currently required four hundred and eighty hours of  
60 recruit training curriculum.

61  
62 (Subsection E) All correction officer recruits shall receive the course of basic training for  
63 correction officers, established in Subsections (A) and (B), as part of their required certification  
64 process.

65  
66 (Subsection F) The Commissioner of Corrections periodically may include within the in-service  
67 training curriculum a course of instruction on persons with an autism spectrum disorder  
68 consistent with the provisions of Subsection B(aa) through Subsection B(hh) of this act.

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70 (Subsection G) The municipal police training committee periodically may include within its in-  
71 service training curriculum a course of instruction on persons with an autism spectrum disorder  
72 consistent with the provisions of Subsection B(aa) through Subsection B(hh) of this act.

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