

HOUSE No. 4811

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the Year Two Thousand Ten

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:—

4 Section 116F:

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

12 The course of instruction and the guidelines shall stress positive responses to such
13 individuals, de-escalating potentially dangerous situations, understanding of the different manner
14 in which such individuals process sensory stimuli and language, and appropriate methods of
15 interrogation. Where appropriate, the training presenters shall include experts on autism
16 spectrum disorders who also have expertise in the law enforcement or corrections field.

17 As used in this section, “law enforcement officer” shall mean any officer of a local police
18 department, capital and state police, and “correction officer” shall mean any officer tasked with
19 the custody, care, or transport of incarcerated or detained persons. As used in this section,
20 “autism spectrum disorder” shall mean a disability on the autism spectrum, which includes
21 autistic disorder, Asperger's disorder, pervasive developmental disorder not otherwise specified,
22 childhood disintegrative disorder, or Rhetts Syndrome, as defined in the most recent edition of
23 the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of the American Psychiatric Association.

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

27 (aa) The nature and manifestations of autism spectrum disorders.

28 (bb) Appropriate techniques for interviewing or interrogating an individual with an
29 autism spectrum disorder, including techniques to ensure legality of statements made, and
30 techniques to protect the rights of the interviewee.

31 (cc) Techniques for locating an individual with an autism spectrum disorder who runs
32 away, and returning said individual while causing as little stress as possible to him or her.

33 (dd) The legal duties imposed on police officers to offer protection and assistance,
34 including guidelines for making felony and misdemeanor arrests, and appropriate techniques for
35 arrest and restraint on an individual with an autism spectrum disorder.

36 (ee) Techniques for de-escalating a potentially dangerous situation to maximize the safety
37 of both the law enforcement officer or correction officer and the individual with an autism
38 spectrum disorder.

39 (ff) Techniques for differentiating between an individual with an autism spectrum
40 disorder from an individual who is belligerent, uncooperative, or otherwise displaying traits
41 similar to the characteristics of an individual with an autism spectrum spectrum disorder.

42 (gg) Procedures to ensure the safety and wellbeing of individuals with an autism
43 spectrum disorder in a correctional facility.

44 (hh) The impact of interaction with law enforcement officers or correction officers on
45 individuals with an autism spectrum disorder.

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

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

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

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

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