

**SENATE . . . . . No. 1568**

**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

PRESENTED BY:

***Michael O. Moore***

*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 adoption of the accompanying bill:

An Act relative to police interactions with persons on the autism spectrum.

PETITION OF:

| NAME:                           | DISTRICT/ADDRESS:                       |                   |
|---------------------------------|---|-------------------|
| <i>Michael O. Moore</i>         | <i>Second Worcester</i>                 |                   |
| <i>Sal N. DiDomenico</i>        | <i>Middlesex and Suffolk</i>            | <i>1/30/2023</i>  |
| <i>John F. Keenan</i>           | <i>Norfolk and Plymouth</i>             | <i>2/2/2023</i>   |
| <i>Michael D. Brady</i>         | <i>Second Plymouth and Norfolk</i>      | <i>2/2/2023</i>   |
| <i>Lydia Edwards</i>            | <i>Third Suffolk</i>                    | <i>2/8/2023</i>   |
| <i>Jack Patrick Lewis</i>       | <i>7th Middlesex</i>                    | <i>2/8/2023</i>   |
| <i>John C. Velis</i>            | <i>Hampden and Hampshire</i>            | <i>2/8/2023</i>   |
| <i>Patrick M. O'Connor</i>      | <i>First Plymouth and Norfolk</i>       | <i>2/8/2023</i>   |
| <i>Carmine Lawrence Gentile</i> | <i>13th Middlesex</i>                   | <i>2/15/2023</i>  |
| <i>James B. Eldridge</i>        | <i>Middlesex and Worcester</i>          | <i>2/15/2023</i>  |
| <i>Bruce E. Tarr</i>            | <i>First Essex and Middlesex</i>        | <i>2/22/2023</i>  |
| <i>Bradley H. Jones, Jr.</i>    | <i>20th Middlesex</i>                   | <i>3/2/2023</i>   |
| <i>Hannah Kane</i>              | <i>11th Worcester</i>                   | <i>3/2/2023</i>   |
| <i>Walter F. Timilty</i>        | <i>Norfolk, Plymouth and Bristol</i>    | <i>4/14/2023</i>  |
| <i>Brendan P. Crighton</i>      | <i>Third Essex</i>                      | <i>5/1/2023</i>   |
| <i>Vanna Howard</i>             | <i>17th Middlesex</i>                   | <i>5/9/2023</i>   |
| <i>Rebecca L. Rausch</i>        | <i>Norfolk, Worcester and Middlesex</i> | <i>7/12/2023</i>  |
| <i>Marcus S. Vaughn</i>         | <i>9th Norfolk</i>                      | <i>12/11/2023</i> |

**SENATE . . . . . No. 1568**

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By Mr. Moore, a petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 1568) of Michael O. Moore, Sal N. DiDomenico, John F. Keenan, Michael D. Brady and other members of the General Court for legislation relative to police training in appropriate interactions with persons on the autism spectrum and other intellectual and developmental disabilities. Public Safety and Homeland Security.

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[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION  
SEE SENATE, NO. 1628 OF 2021-2022.]

**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Third General Court  
(2023-2024)**  
\_\_\_\_\_

An Act relative to police interactions with persons on the autism spectrum.

*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 1. Chapter 6 of the General Laws is hereby amended by inserting after section  
2 116I the following section:-

3 Section 116I ½. (a) For the purposes of this section, the following words shall, unless the  
4 context clearly requires otherwise, have the following meanings:-

5 “Agency”, the ability to make independent decisions and act in one’s own best interests.

6 “Autism spectrum”, a disorder or disability on the autism spectrum, including but not be  
7 limited to: autistic disorder, Asperger's disorder, pervasive developmental disorder - not  
8 otherwise specified, childhood disintegrative disorder, nonverbal learning disorder or Rhett's

9 Syndrome, as defined in the most recent edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of the  
10 American Psychiatric Association.

11 “Correction officer”, any officer employed by a correctional facility who is tasked with  
12 the custody, care, or transport of incarcerated or detained persons.

13 “Correctional facility”, as defined in section 1 of chapter 125.

14 “Intellectual and developmental disabilities”, an intellectual or developmental disability,  
15 as defined in the most recent edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of the American  
16 Psychiatric Association.

17 “Law enforcement agency”, (i) a state, county, municipal or district law enforcement  
18 agency, including, but not limited to: a city, town or district police department, the office of  
19 environmental law enforcement, the University of Massachusetts police department, the  
20 department of the state police, the Massachusetts Port Authority police department, also known  
21 as the Port of Boston Authority police department, and the Massachusetts Bay Transportation  
22 Authority police department; (ii) a sheriff’s department in its performance of police duties and  
23 functions; or (iii) a public or private college, university or other educational institution or  
24 hospital police department.

25 “Law enforcement officer” or “officer”, any officer of an agency, including the head of  
26 the agency; a special state police officer appointed pursuant to section 58 or section 63 of chapter  
27 22C; a special sheriff appointed pursuant to section 4 of chapter 37 performing police duties and  
28 functions; a deputy sheriff appointed pursuant to section 3 of said chapter 37 performing police  
29 duties and functions; a constable executing an arrest for any reason; or any other special, reserve  
30 or intermittent police officer.

31 (b) The municipal police training committee shall establish an in-service training  
32 curriculum on or before January 1, 2024 for the training of law enforcement officers and  
33 correction officers in appropriate interactions with persons on the autism spectrum and persons  
34 with other intellectual and developmental disabilities; provided, that this training shall not  
35 increase the currently required hours of in-service training. The municipal police training  
36 committee shall develop guidelines for law enforcement response to persons on the autism  
37 spectrum and persons with other intellectual and developmental disabilities who are victims or  
38 witnesses to a crime, or suspected or convicted of a crime. The course of instruction and the  
39 guidelines shall emphasize: (1) positive responses to persons on the autism spectrum and persons  
40 with other intellectual and developmental disabilities, (2) de-escalating potentially dangerous  
41 situations, (3) understanding of the different manner by which persons on the autism spectrum  
42 and persons with other intellectual and developmental disabilities process sensory stimuli and  
43 language and (4) appropriate methods of interrogation. The training shall address the best  
44 practices for interactions with the broad range of persons on the autism spectrum and persons  
45 with other intellectual and developmental disabilities, including those with intersecting  
46 marginalized identities.

47 The training presenters shall include presentations from adults on the autism spectrum.  
48 Where appropriate, the training presenters shall also include experts on autism spectrum  
49 disorders who also have expertise in the law enforcement or correction field.

50 (c) The in-service training for law enforcement officers and correction officers shall  
51 include not less than 2 hours of instruction in the procedures and techniques described below:

52 (1) The nature and manifestations of autism spectrum disorders and other intellectual and  
53 developmental disabilities.

54 (2) Appropriate techniques for interviewing or interrogating persons on the autism  
55 spectrum and persons with other intellectual and developmental disabilities, including techniques  
56 to ensure legality of statements made, and techniques to protect the rights of the interviewee.

57 (3) Techniques for locating persons on the autism spectrum and persons with other  
58 intellectual and developmental disabilities who runs away and are in danger, and returning the  
59 person while causing as little stress as possible to the person.

60 (4) The legal duties imposed on police officers to offer protection and assistance,  
61 including guidelines for making felony and misdemeanor arrests, and appropriate techniques for  
62 arrest and restraint of persons on the autism spectrum and persons with other intellectual and  
63 developmental disabilities.

64 (5) Techniques for de-escalating a potentially dangerous situation to maximize the safety  
65 of both: (i) law enforcement officers or correction officers and (ii) persons on the autism  
66 spectrum and persons with other intellectual and developmental disabilities.

67 (6) Techniques for differentiating between persons on the autism spectrum and persons  
68 with other intellectual and developmental disabilities from a person who is belligerent,  
69 uncooperative or otherwise displaying traits similar to the characteristics of a person on the  
70 autism spectrum and persons with other intellectual and developmental disabilities.

71 (7) Procedures to ensure the safety and wellbeing of persons on the autism spectrum and  
72 persons with other intellectual and developmental disabilities in a correctional facility.