

## Legislation Text

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Recognizing April 2013 as Autism Awareness Month in honor of individuals living with autism, their families and those working to improve the quality of life for the entire autism community.

WHEREAS, April is National Autism Awareness Month. Autism is a spectrum disorder, that impairs an individual's ability to learn healthy and socially accepted interactive behaviors and to understand verbal, nonverbal and reciprocal communication; and

WHEREAS, In 2012, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention estimated that 1 in every 88 children in the U.S. is on the autism spectrum; and

WHEREAS, The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has been an international leader in the fight for individuals with autism. Under the Department of Public Welfare, the Office of Developmental Programs was created along with the Bureau of Autism Services; and

WHEREAS, Philadelphia is the home of cutting edge research, experimental studies finding best strategies and inclusive approaches to mainstream experiences, all of which improve the quality of life for individuals with autism and their families; and

WHEREAS, David Mandell, director of the Center for Mental Health Policy and Services Research at the University of Pennsylvania, is dedicated to increasing the quality of education and healthcare for people with autism in Philadelphia; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Mandell has partnered with the School District of Philadelphia, Elwyn and the Philadelphia Department of Behavioral Health for the last five years to provide training in evidence-based autism intervention to hundreds of professionals serving thousands of children with autism; and

WHEREAS, Craig Newschaffer is the founding director of the A.J. Drexel Autism Institute at Drexel University and a professor in the Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics at the Drexel University School of Public Health; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Newschaffer and his team have created the first autism research center focused on public health science. Their Early Autism Risk Longitudinal Investigation Study will examine the possible environmental risk factors for autism and study whether there is any interplay between environmental factors and genetic susceptibility; and

WHEREAS, Developmental pediatrician Wendy Ross, who heads Autism Inclusion Resources, is dedicated to

making public places more accessible and easier to navigate for people living with autism and their families;  
and

WHEREAS, Dr. Ross has partnered with the Philadelphia Phillies, Aramark and Theraplay to make Citizens Bank Park the first-ever autism friendly ballpark in the nation. Autism Inclusion Resources has trained nearly 3,000 game day staff and concession vendors for the 2013 baseball season, and they continue prepare families step by step so they can enjoy the excitement and fun of the nation's pastime; now therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That we hereby recognize April 2013 as Autism Awareness Month in honor of individuals living with autism, their families and those working to improve the quality of life for the entire autism community.