

## Legislation Text

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Authorizing the Committee on Public Health and Human Services to investigate current procedures and training for emergency personnel who render aid to children and adults with Autism in an effort to develop a training program for first responders who provide treatment to Children and Adults with Autism.

**WHEREAS**, Autism is a disorder of neural development

<[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neurodevelopmental\\_disorder](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neurodevelopmental_disorder)> that is characterized by impaired social interaction <[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Interpersonal\\_relationship](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Interpersonal_relationship)> and communication

<<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Communication>>, and by restricted and repetitive behavior, signs of which begin before a child is 3 years old; and

**WHEREAS**, Autism affects information processing in the brain <[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human\\_brain](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_brain)> by altering how nerve cells and their synapses <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Synapse>> connect and organize; and

**WHEREAS**, Children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) are particularly vulnerable to danger, given their lack of awareness regarding their surroundings, their difficulties with communication, and their social delays; and

**WHEREAS**, In recent years, with ASD prevalence rates soaring to 1 in 110 children, families of children with ASD have flocked to cities such as Philadelphia where services for ASD tend to be more plentiful; and

**WHEREAS**, As a result, communities in the Philadelphia area are more likely to experience emergencies involving children and youth with ASD than ever before; and

**WHEREAS**, People on the autistic spectrum may display several behaviors which place them in danger such as a lack of fear, inability to comprehend social cues, elopement, heightened reaction to sensory stimuli such as flashing lights or sirens, and a literal interpretation of language; and

**WHEREAS**, Since first-responders frequently encounter individuals with ASD, it is vital that they receive training in order to better understand the behavior of people on the autistic spectrum; and

**WHEREAS**, On August 9, 2010, a 12 year old boy with autism died in a fire in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; and

**WHEREAS**, With education, first responders may be to identify people on the autistic spectrum and utilize strategies that could potentially save that person's life; now, therefore, be it

**RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA**, That City Council hereby authorizes the Committee on Public Health and Human Services to investigate current procedures and training for emergency personnel who render aid to children and adults with Autism in an effort to develop a training program for first responders who provide treatment to Children and Adults with Autism.

