

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 50

Session of 2023

INTRODUCED BY GALLAGHER, McNEILL, GIRAL, SAPPEY, JAMES, KAZEEM, GUENST, SCHLOSSBERG, KHAN, MARSHALL, MADDEN, McANDREW, HADDOCK, VENKAT, DELLOSO, PARKER, HOWARD, HOHENSTEIN, KINSEY, HILL-EVANS, NEILSON, GILLEN, TAKAC, CABELL, STURLA, CERRATO, SANCHEZ, WARREN, GERGELY AND CONKLIN, MARCH 30, 2023

AS REPORTED FROM COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, AS AMENDED, APRIL 26, 2023

A RESOLUTION

1 Designating the month of April 2023 as "Autism Acceptance Month"
2 in Pennsylvania.

3 WHEREAS, Autism ~~spectrum disorder~~ is a complex disability <--
4 requiring greater recognition, understanding and acceptance to
5 ensure that all individuals living with ~~autism spectrum disorder~~ <--
6 ON THE SPECTRUM are accurately diagnosed and appropriately <--
7 supported throughout their lives; and

8 WHEREAS, Autism ~~spectrum disorder~~ is a lifelong neurological <--
9 and developmental disability resulting in ~~impairment of~~ <--
10 DIFFERENCES IN an individual's ability to learn and develop <--
11 ~~healthy~~ interactive behaviors and ~~understand verbal, nonverbal~~ <--
12 ~~and reciprocal~~ DIFFERENCES IN VERBAL AND NONVERBAL <--
13 communication; and

14 WHEREAS, Autism is defined by a certain set of behaviors ~~and~~ <--
15 ~~is a "spectrum disorder"~~ that affects individuals differently
16 and to varying degrees; and

1 WHEREAS, Autism ~~spectrum disorder~~ is one of the fastest- <--
2 growing developmental ~~disorders~~ DISABILITIES in the United <--
3 States; and

4 WHEREAS, There is no known single cause of autism, but
5 increased awareness, funding and acceptance can help PEOPLE AND <--
6 THEIR families today; and

7 WHEREAS, ~~Although a cure for autism spectrum disorder has not~~ <--
8 ~~been found, individuals living with autism spectrum disorder~~
9 INDIVIDUALS LIVING ON THE SPECTRUM can be assisted in reaching <--
10 their greatest potential through accurate early diagnosis,
11 appropriate education and intervention; and

12 WHEREAS, According to the Centers for Disease Control and
13 Prevention, 1 in 54 individuals under 21 years of age ~~are~~ <--
14 ~~affected by autism spectrum disorder~~ HAVE AUTISM; and <--

15 WHEREAS, The number of adults living ~~with autism spectrum~~ <--
16 ~~disorder~~ ON THE SPECTRUM is expected to increase dramatically <--
17 over the next few years as adolescents age into adulthood; and

18 WHEREAS, Individuals of all genders, races, ethnicities and
19 economic backgrounds can ~~be diagnosed with autism spectrum~~ <--
20 ~~disorder;~~ and

21 ~~WHEREAS, Autism spectrum disorder is four times more likely~~
22 ~~to affect boys than girls;~~ and HAVE AUTISM; AND <--

23 WHEREAS, One in 27 boys and 1 in 116 girls are diagnosed with
24 autism ~~spectrum disorder;~~ and <--

25 WHEREAS, A GROWING BODY OF RESEARCH SUGGESTS THAT DIAGNOSTIC <--
26 BIAS MAY CONTRIBUTE TO THE GREATER LIKELIHOOD THAT WOMEN AND
27 GIRLS ARE MISDIAGNOSED, UNDERDIAGNOSED OR DIAGNOSED LATER IN
28 LIFE; AND

29 WHEREAS, STUDIES HAVE SHOWN DIFFERENCES IN AUTISM SYMPTOMS BY
30 GENDER, WHICH ARE NOT ALWAYS REFLECTED IN THE DIAGNOSTIC

1 CRITERIA USED; AND

2 WHEREAS, Autism ~~spectrum disorder~~ can OFTEN be reliably <--
3 diagnosed by the age of two; and

4 WHEREAS, Autism ~~spectrum disorder~~ is more difficult to <--
5 diagnose in adults than children AND HIGHLIGHTS THE IMPORTANCE <--
6 OF PROVIDER COMPETENCE IN THE EVALUATION AND DIAGNOSIS OF
7 AUTISM; and

8 WHEREAS, There may be more than 185,000 individuals on the
9 autism spectrum in Pennsylvania; and

10 WHEREAS, The Department of Human Services created the Office
11 of Developmental Programs, which includes the Bureau of Supports
12 for Autism and Special Populations, to provide expertise and
13 support for all agencies serving Pennsylvanians living ~~with~~ <--
14 ~~autism spectrum disorder~~ ON THE SPECTRUM; therefore be it <--

15 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives designate the
16 month of April 2023 as "Autism Acceptance Month" in
17 Pennsylvania.