

1 A RESOLUTION urging first responders, including state, city, and county peace
2 officers, firefighters, and emergency medical services personnel, to receive training on
3 autism spectrum disorders.

4 WHEREAS, "autism spectrum disorders" refers to a group of complex
5 neurodevelopment disorders characterized by repetitive and characteristic patterns of
6 behavior and difficulties with social communication and interaction; and

7 WHEREAS, the "spectrum" refers to a wide range of symptoms, skills, and levels
8 of disability in functioning that can occur; and

9 WHEREAS, autism spectrum disorders occur in every racial and ethnic group,
10 across all socioeconomic levels, and represent the fastest growing serious developmental
11 disability in the United States, affecting approximately 1 in 68 children; and

12 WHEREAS, first responders may not be aware that an individual has autism when
13 arriving on the scene in an emergency or crisis situation, and being able to identify and
14 interact constructively in these cases can be essential to their safe resolution; and

15 WHEREAS, the difficulties individuals with autism may have with social
16 communication and interaction can include a variety of responses to certain stressful
17 stimuli; and

18 WHEREAS, some individuals with autism do not have a range of sensations and
19 may not feel the cold, heat, or pain in a typical manner, or may fail to acknowledge pain
20 or may respond to pain in unusual ways; and

21 WHEREAS, some individuals with autism may have tactile sensory issues and
22 sensory perception issues, which can increase anxiety and aggression in response to
23 routine procedures carried out by a first responder; and

24 WHEREAS, persons with autism may also have an impaired sense of danger or may
25 not respond to verbal commands, which can be mistaken for disobedience; and

26 WHEREAS, the level of noise and commotion that may accompany a crisis
27 situation may overwhelm an individual with autism, as well as the very presence of

1 uniformed first responders; and

2 WHEREAS, first responders are trained to respond to crisis situations according to
3 a set protocol, but that protocol may not always be best, or may inadvertently be harmful
4 or escalating, for a person with autism; and

5 WHEREAS, for these reasons and many others, it is critical that first responders,
6 including state, city, and county peace officers, firefighters, and emergency medical
7 services personnel, receive training on autism spectrum disorders; and

8 WHEREAS, because first responders are vital in their role as protectors of people
9 and public safety, such training could be not only effective and valuable, but also life-
10 saving for the people of the Commonwealth of Kentucky;

11 NOW, THEREFORE,

12 ***Be it resolved by the House of Representatives of the General Assembly of the***
13 ***Commonwealth of Kentucky:***

14 ➔Section 1. The House of Representatives expresses appreciation for the integral
15 role first responders play in caring for the citizens of Kentucky, and urges first
16 responders, including state, city, and county peace officers, firefighters, and emergency
17 medical services personnel, to receive training on autism spectrum disorders.

18 ➔Section 2. The Clerk of the House of Representatives is directed to transmit a
19 copy of this Resolution to the Commissioner of the Department of Kentucky State Police,
20 919 Versailles Road, Frankfort, Kentucky 40601; the Executive Director of the Kentucky
21 Association of Chiefs of Police, 368 Amon Lisanby Spur Road, Dawson Springs,
22 Kentucky 42408; the President of the Kentucky Firefighter's Association, 316 East Third
23 Street, Grayson, Kentucky 41143; and the Executive Director of the Kentucky Board of
24 Emergency Medical Services, 118 James Court, Suite 50, Lexington, Kentucky 40505.