

## CHAPTER 53

**AN ACT** establishing a task force to study and make recommendations concerning mobility and support services needs of New Jersey adults with autism spectrum disorder.

**BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:*

1. The Legislature finds and declares that:
  - a. In 2013, the Governor's Council for Medical Research and Treatment of Autism announced its intent to provide a two-year research grant to Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey to research the transportation needs of people with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and develop policies, procedures, and accommodations to improve the quality of life of those on the autism spectrum.
  - b. In September 2015, the Center for Advanced Infrastructure and Transportation (CAIT) at Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey issued a report entitled "Detour to the Right Place: A Study with Recommendations for Addressing the Transportation Needs and Barriers of Adults on the Autism Spectrum in New Jersey."
  - c. The report found several areas in which State policies and programs can be improved to help remove or lessen barriers, and enhance access to transportation services.
  - d. According to CAIT, very little had been written or reported about transportation issues encountered by adults with ASD prior to CAIT's report.
  - e. The report makes 15 recommendations for action, which require evaluation and implementation through a coordinated effort of several State agencies, researchers knowledgeable about the issues facing adults with ASD, ASD advocacy groups, and adults with ASD.
  - f. In addition to the need to study and make recommendations concerning transportation needs and barriers for adults with ASD, there is a need to study and make recommendations concerning challenges adults with ASD have in securing support services when transitioning from K-12 education to post-secondary education in order for adults with ASD to have the best opportunity to succeed and to become productive members of society.
  - g. It is in the public interest of the State to establish a task force to study and make recommendations concerning the mobility and support services needs of New Jersey adults with ASD by reviewing available research and literature on these issues, including the CAIT report, and developing a priority list of recommendations that considers the cost and feasibility of implementing these recommendations.
2. a. There is established the New Jersey Adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder Mobility and Support Services Task Force. The purpose of the task force is to study and make recommendations concerning mobility and support services needs of New Jersey adults with autism spectrum disorder.
  - b. The task force shall consist of the following 11 members:
    - (1) the Commissioner of Education or a designee, who shall serve ex-officio;
    - (2) the Commissioner of Children and Families or a designee, who shall serve ex-officio;
    - (3) the Commissioner of Health or a designee, who shall serve ex-officio;
    - (4) the Commissioner of Human Services or a designee, who shall serve ex-officio;
    - (5) the Commissioner of Labor and Workforce Development or a designee, who shall serve ex-officio;
    - (6) the Commissioner of Transportation or a designee, who shall serve ex-officio;
    - (7) the Secretary of Higher Education or a designee, who shall serve ex-officio;
    - (8) Four members of the public as follows:

(a) a researcher affiliated with the Center for Advanced Infrastructure and Transportation at Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey, who shall be the chairperson and shall be appointed by the Senate President;

(b) a representative of an organization dedicated to the advancement of autism spectrum disorder research, understanding, and treatment, who shall be appointed by the Speaker of the General Assembly;

(c) a representative of an organization that advocates on behalf of families affected by autism spectrum disorder, who shall be appointed by the Speaker of the General Assembly; and

(d) a New Jersey adult resident with autism spectrum disorder, who shall be appointed by the Senate President.

c. Appointments to the task force shall be made within 30 days of the effective date of P.L.2017, c.53. Vacancies in the membership of the task force shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointments were made. Members of the task force shall serve without compensation but shall be reimbursed for necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties as members of the task force and within the limits of funds appropriated or otherwise made available to the task force for its purposes.

3. The task force shall organize as soon as practicable following the appointment of its members, but no later than 60 days after the effective date of P.L.2017, c.53. The task force may appoint a secretary who need not be a member of the task force.

4. The Center for Advanced Infrastructure and Transportation at Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey shall provide stenographic, clerical, and other administrative assistance and professional staff as the task force requires to carry out its work. The task force shall be entitled to call to its assistance and avail itself of the services of the employees of any State, county, or municipal department, board, bureau, commission, or agency as it may require and as may be available for its purposes.

5. The duties of the task force shall include, but are not limited to:

a. reviewing current State policies as they relate to transportation services and autism spectrum disorder related educational and employment services provided to adults with autism spectrum disorder;

b. reviewing and evaluating research and literature, including any national best practices, professional standards, or guidelines regarding alleviating transportation barriers and obstacles for adults with autism spectrum disorder and increasing access and availability of autism spectrum disorder related education and employment support services;

c. consulting with and evaluating testimony from groups, organizations, entities, and other institutions that care for adults with autism spectrum disorder or provide services to families affected by autism spectrum disorder;

d. developing and issuing recommendations to alleviate current and emerging barriers and obstacles to the satisfactory use by adults with autism spectrum disorder of the State's transportation infrastructure and system and to provide for increased access and availability to autism spectrum disorder related education and employment support services;

e. developing a ranking of the recommendations made in subsection d. of this section and evaluating implementation factors for each recommendation, including, but not limited to, the importance to the autism community, cost of implementation, and feasibility of implementation; and

f. soliciting and receiving grants and other funds that are made available for the task force's purposes by any governmental, public, not-for-profit, or for-profit agency, including funds that are made available under any federal or State law, regulation, or program.

6. The task force shall hold at least three public hearings to gather information regarding the barriers and obstacles adults with autism spectrum disorder face in their use of the State's transportation infrastructure and system and the need for autism spectrum disorder related educational and employment support services.

7. The task force shall issue a report to the Governor, and to the Legislature pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1), no later than one year following its organizational meeting. The report shall contain the task force's findings and recommendations and shall rank each recommendation with respect to the feasibility of implementing the recommendation.

8. This act shall take effect immediately and shall expire upon submission of the task force's report required to be prepared pursuant to section 7 of this act.

Approved May 1, 2017.