

ASSEMBLY JOINT RESOLUTION

No. 49

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2020 SESSION

Sponsored by:

Assemblywoman BRITNEE N. TIMBERLAKE

District 34 (Essex and Passaic)

SYNOPSIS

Designates April of each year as “Autism Awareness Month” in NJ.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

Introduced Pending Technical Review by Legislative Counsel.



1 **A JOINT RESOLUTION** designating April of each year as “Autism
2 Awareness Month” in New Jersey.
3
4 **WHEREAS**, Autism spectrum disorders are a group of developmental
5 disabilities characterized by atypical development in socialization,
6 communication, and behavior, which generally appear before three
7 years of age and continue over a lifetime; and
8 **WHEREAS**, An estimated one-third of people with autism are unable to
9 communicate verbally; and
10 **WHEREAS**, Approximately two-thirds of children with autism between
11 the ages of 6 and 15 have been the victims of bullying; and
12 **WHEREAS**, Nearly 28 percent of 8-year-olds with an autism spectrum
13 disorder have engaged in self-injurious behavior such as head
14 banging, arm biting, or skin scratching; and
15 **WHEREAS**, Almost half of those with autism have wandered or bolted
16 from safety, and drowning accounts for approximately 90 percent
17 of deaths associated with wandering or bolting by children with
18 autism aged 14 and younger; and
19 **WHEREAS**, The lifetime cost of caring for a person with autism is
20 estimated to be as great as \$2.4 million; and
21 **WHEREAS**, Although there is no known cure for autism, research
22 suggests that early diagnosis and treatment can reduce the cost of
23 lifetime care and improve outcomes for people with autism; and
24 **WHEREAS**, According to the Centers for Disease Control and
25 Prevention, more than 3.5 million Americans live with an autism
26 spectrum disorder, and one out of every 59 American children born
27 today will be diagnosed with autism; and
28 **WHEREAS**, New Jersey has the highest rate of autism in the nation,
29 and the prevalence of autism in the State continues to exceed and
30 outpace the rate of autism in other states; and
31 **WHEREAS**, Since the 1970s, National Autism Awareness Month has
32 taken place annually in April to highlight the growing need for
33 concern and awareness about autism; and
34 **WHEREAS**, Given the rapidly growing rate of autism spectrum
35 disorders in New Jersey and the pressing need for early detection, it
36 is altogether fitting and proper, and within the public interest, to
37 designate April of each year as “Autism Awareness Month” in New
38 Jersey and to encourage the citizens of this State to join the
39 observance of the week and raise awareness of autism spectrum
40 disorders; now, therefore,
41
42 **BE IT RESOLVED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the*
43 *State of New Jersey:*
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45 1. April of each year shall be designated “Autism Awareness
46 Month” in New Jersey.
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48 2. The Governor is respectfully requested to annually issue a

1 proclamation calling upon public officials and citizens of this State
2 to observe “Autism Awareness Month” with appropriate activities
3 and programs.
4

5 3. This joint resolution shall take effect immediately.
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8 STATEMENT
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10 This resolution designates April of each year as “Autism
11 Awareness Month” in New Jersey to coincide with National Autism
12 Awareness Month. Autism spectrum disorders are a group of
13 developmental disabilities characterized by atypical development in
14 socialization, communication, and behavior, symptoms that
15 generally appear before three years of age and continue over a
16 lifetime.

17 People with autism face a variety of communication,
18 socialization, safety, and financial challenges. Although there is no
19 known cure for autism, research suggests that early diagnosis and
20 treatment can reduce the cost of lifetime care and improve outcomes
21 for people with autism.

22 According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention,
23 one out of every 59 American children born today will be diagnosed
24 with autism spectrum disorder. New Jersey has the highest rate of
25 autism in the nation, and the prevalence of autism in the State
26 continues to exceed and outpace the rate of autism in other states.