

Senate Bill 433

By: Senators Strickland of the 42nd, Albers of the 56th, Bearden of the 30th, Echols of the 49th, Anderson of the 43rd and others

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

1 To amend Article 3 of Chapter 2 of Title 40 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated,
2 relating to prestige license plates and special plates for certain persons and vehicles, so as to
3 provide for special license plates for persons with autism spectrum disorder or a
4 developmental disability and for such person's spouse, parent, or legal guardian; to provide
5 for a process for obtaining such plates; to provide for the design of such plates; to provide
6 for the transfer of such plates; to provide for penalties for willful and false representations
7 and statements; to provide a definition; to amend Chapter 8 of Chapter 35 of the Official
8 Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to employment and training of peace officers, so as to
9 provide for training regarding encounters with persons with autism spectrum disorder or a
10 developmental disability; to provide for collaboration with the Department of Community
11 Health and nonprofit organizations regarding such training; to provide for a short title; to
12 provide for related matters; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

13 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

14 **SECTION 1.**

15 This Act shall be known and may be cited as "Rio's Law."

SECTION 2.

Article 3 of Chapter 2 of Title 40 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to prestige license plates and special plates for certain persons and vehicles, is amended by revising Code Section 40-2-75, which is reserved, as follows:

"40-2-75.

(a) Any owner of a private passenger motor vehicle who is a resident of Georgia, upon complying with the motor vehicle laws relating to registration, licensing, and payment of fees and upon submitting an affidavit of a practitioner of the healing arts stating that the owner or his or her spouse, child, or ward is a person with autism spectrum disorder or a developmental disability shall be issued a specially designated 'Autism Spectrum Disorder or Developmental Disability' license plate from the commissioner. As used in this Code section, the term 'practitioner of the healing arts' means a person holding a license to practice medicine issued pursuant to Article 2 of Chapter 34 of Title 43 or a person holding a license to practice psychology pursuant to Article 1 of Chapter 39 of Title 43.

(b)(1) Upon complying with the motor vehicle laws relating to registration, licensing, and payment of fees and upon submission of proof of autism spectrum disorder or a developmental disability as provided in subsection (a) of this Code section, as applicable:

(A) Any resident person who is the joint owner of a motor vehicle with a person with autism spectrum disorder or a developmental disability as prescribed in this Code section shall be authorized to obtain such specialized license plate for such jointly owned vehicle; and

(B) Any resident motor vehicle owner who is the spouse, parent, or legal guardian of a person with autism spectrum disorder or a developmental disability as prescribed in this Code section shall be authorized to obtain such specialized license plate for such vehicle.

(2) Upon the death of the person with autism spectrum disorder or a developmental disability or if the joint ownership of such vehicle ceases for any reason, the specialized

43 license plate shall be canceled and the owner of such motor vehicle shall be issued a
44 regular license plate for such vehicle.

45 (c) The commissioner is directed to furnish specialized license plates as provided for in
46 this Code section, which shall bear the official 'Just Bee' symbol or a reasonable facsimile
47 thereof, or such other symbols as the commissioner may deem appropriate.

48 (d) Any specialized license plate issued pursuant to the provisions of this Code section
49 shall be transferred to another vehicle as provided in Code Section 40-2-80.

50 (e) Any person who willfully and falsely represents himself or herself as having the
51 qualifications to obtain the specialized license plate prescribed by this Code section shall
52 be guilty of a misdemeanor.

53 (f) Any practitioner of the healing arts who knowingly and willfully makes a false or
54 misleading statement in his or her affidavit stating that an applicant has autism spectrum
55 disorder or a developmental disability as prescribed in this Code section shall be guilty of
56 a misdemeanor.

57 (g) Any person owning a vehicle bearing a specialized license plate prescribed by this
58 Code section who is not authorized to have such plate under this Code section shall be
59 guilty of a misdemeanor. Reserved."

60 **SECTION 3.**

61 Chapter 8 of Chapter 35 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to employment
62 and training of peace officers, is amended by adding a new Code section to read as follows:

63 "35-8-28.

64 (a) Beginning January 1, 2027, the basic training courses required pursuant to this chapter
65 shall include training in interactions with persons with autism spectrum disorder or a
66 developmental disability.

67 (b) Such training course shall include, but shall not be limited to:

- 68 (1) Best practices for encounters with a person who has a specialized license plate under
69 Code Section 40-2-75;
- 70 (2) Best practices for conducting investigations that involve a person with autism
71 spectrum disorder or a developmental disability;
- 72 (3) Instruction on how to interact with persons with autism spectrum disorder or a
73 developmental disability;
- 74 (4) Techniques for recognizing the behavioral symptoms and characteristics of autism
75 spectrum disorder or a developmental disability;
- 76 (5) Techniques for effective communication with persons with autism spectrum disorder
77 or a developmental disability;
- 78 (6) Techniques for employing alternatives to physical restraints when encountering
79 persons with autism spectrum disorder or a developmental disability; and
- 80 (7) Protocols for contacting the caregiver of a person with autism spectrum disorder or
81 a developmental disability during an emergency situation.
- 82 (c) The council shall develop and implement or approve a training program under this
83 Code section in collaboration with the Department of Community Health and nonprofit
84 organizations with proven expertise in autism spectrum disorders and developmental
85 disabilities."

86 **SECTION 4.**

87 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.