

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

**AS PASSED SENATE**

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 Title 35 of the Official Code  
8 of Georgia Annotated, relating to employment and training of peace officers, so as to provide  
9 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, the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities, and nonprofit  
12 organizations regarding such training; to provide for a short title; to provide for related  
13 matters; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

14 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

15 **SECTION 1.**

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

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**SECTION 2.**

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

21 "40-2-75.

22 (a) On or after January 1, 2027, any owner of a private passenger motor vehicle who is a  
23 resident of Georgia, upon complying with the motor vehicle laws relating to registration,  
24 licensing, and payment of fees and upon submitting an affidavit of a practitioner of the  
25 healing arts stating that the owner or his or her spouse, child, or ward is a person with  
26 autism spectrum disorder or a developmental disability shall be issued a specially  
27 designated 'Autism Spectrum Disorder or Developmental Disability' license plate from the  
28 commissioner. As used in this Code section, the term 'practitioner of the healing arts'  
29 means a person holding a license to practice medicine issued pursuant to Article 2 of  
30 Chapter 34 of Title 43 or a person holding a license to practice psychology pursuant to  
31 Article 1 of Chapter 39 of Title 43.

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

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

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

43 (2) Upon the death of the person with autism spectrum disorder or a developmental  
44 disability or if the joint ownership of such vehicle ceases for any reason, the specialized  
45 license plate shall be canceled and the owner of such motor vehicle shall be issued a  
46 regular license plate for such vehicle.

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

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

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

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

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

62 **SECTION 3.**

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

65 "35-8-28.

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

- 69 (b) Such training course shall include, but shall not be limited to:  
70 (1) Best practices for encounters with a person who has a specialized license plate under  
71 Code Section 40-2-75;  
72 (2) Best practices for conducting investigations that involve a person with autism  
73 spectrum disorder or a developmental disability;  
74 (3) Instruction on how to interact with persons with autism spectrum disorder or a  
75 developmental disability;  
76 (4) Techniques for recognizing the behavioral symptoms and characteristics of autism  
77 spectrum disorder or a developmental disability;  
78 (5) Techniques for effective communication with persons with autism spectrum disorder  
79 or a developmental disability;  
80 (6) Techniques for employing alternatives to physical restraints when encountering  
81 persons with autism spectrum disorder or a developmental disability; and  
82 (7) Protocols for contacting the caregiver of a person with autism spectrum disorder or  
83 a developmental disability during an emergency situation.  
84 (c) The council shall develop and implement or approve a training program under this  
85 Code section in collaboration with the Department of Community Health, the Department  
86 of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities, and nonprofit organizations with  
87 proven expertise in autism spectrum disorders and developmental disabilities."

88 **SECTION 4.**

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