

ASSEMBLY JOINT RESOLUTION

No. 164

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED MAY 7, 2020

Sponsored by:

Assemblyman RONALD S. DANCER

District 12 (Burlington, Middlesex, Monmouth and Ocean)

Assemblyman DANIEL R. BENSON

District 14 (Mercer and Middlesex)

Assemblywoman VALERIE VAINIERI HUTTLE

District 37 (Bergen)

Co-Sponsored by:

Assemblywoman Dunn

SYNOPSIS

Establishes “Autism and Mental Disorders Study Commission.”

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 5/14/2020)

1 **A JOINT RESOLUTION** establishing the “Autism and Mental
2 Disorders Study Commission.”

3
4 **BE IT RESOLVED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the*
5 *State of New Jersey:*

6
7 1. There is hereby established the “Autism and Mental
8 Disorders Study Commission.”

9 a. The commission shall consist of seven members, to be
10 appointed as follows:

11 (1) the Commissioner of Health, or the commissioner’s
12 designee, who shall serve ex officio;

13 (2) the Commissioner of Human Services, or the
14 commissioner’s designee, who shall serve ex officio;

15 (3) one member to be appointed by the President of the Senate;

16 (4) one member to be appointed by the Minority Leader of the
17 Senate;

18 (5) one member to be appointed by the Speaker of the General
19 Assembly;

20 (6) one member to be appointed by the Minority Leader of the
21 General Assembly; and

22 (7) one member to be appointed by the Governor.

23 b. Any vacancy in the membership of the commission shall be
24 filled in the same manner in which the original appointment was
25 made.

26 c. It shall be the duty of the commission to study how certain
27 organizations, including hospitals, law enforcement agencies,
28 prosecutors’ offices, and courts, train their employees to identify
29 and interact with people with autism, Down syndrome, and other
30 mental disorders.

31 d. The members of the commission shall be appointed within
32 60 days following the date of enactment of this section. The
33 commission shall organize as soon as practicable after the
34 appointment of its members, and shall select a chairperson from
35 among its membership, and a secretary who need not be a member
36 of the commission. The presence of four members of the
37 commission shall constitute a quorum. The commission may
38 conduct business without a quorum, but may only vote on
39 recommendations when a quorum is present. The commission shall
40 be entitled to call to its assistance and avail itself of the services of
41 the employees of any State, county, or municipal department, board,
42 bureau, commission, authority, or agency as it may require, and as
43 may be available to its for its purposes. Members of the
44 commission shall serve without compensation, but shall be entitled
45 to employ stenographic and clerical assistance and incur traveling
46 and other miscellaneous expenses as it may deem necessary in order
47 to perform its duties, within the limits of funds appropriated or
48 otherwise made available to it for its purposes. The commission

1 shall meet at the call of its chairperson, at the times and in the
2 places the chairperson may deem appropriate and necessary to
3 effectuate the commission's duties, and it may conduct public
4 hearings at such place or places as the chairperson shall designate.

5 e. Within one year of its organization, the commission shall
6 issue a report of its findings and conclusions to the Governor and,
7 pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1), to the
8 Legislature. The commission shall dissolve on the 30th day after
9 the date of the issuance of its final report.

10 f. As used in this section:

11 "Autism" means any one of the several conditions classified
12 under pervasive developmental disorder in the Diagnostic and
13 Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fourth Edition, Text
14 Revision (DSM IV-TR) or the International Classification of
15 Diseases, Ninth Revision, Clinical Modification (ICD-9-CM),
16 including: autistic disorder; Asperger's disorder; childhood
17 disintegrative disorder; pervasive developmental disorder not
18 otherwise specified, or unspecified pervasive developmental
19 disorder; Fragile X syndrome, to the extent that the condition is
20 comorbid with pervasive developmental disorder; Rett's disorder, to
21 the extent that the condition is comorbid with pervasive
22 developmental disorder; autism spectrum disorder; and any
23 equivalent conditions as classified under any version of the
24 Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) or
25 the International Classification of Diseases, Clinical Modification
26 (ICD-CM) published on or after January 1, 2000.

27 "Down syndrome" means a chromosomal disorder caused by an
28 error in cell division that results in the presence of an extra, whole,
29 or partial copy of chromosome 21.

30
31 2. This joint resolution shall take effect immediately, and shall
32 expire on the 30th day following the submission of the
33 commission's report to the Governor and Legislature, as provided
34 by subsection e. of section 1 of this joint resolution.

35 36 37 STATEMENT

38
39 This joint resolution establishes the "Autism and Mental
40 Disorders Study Commission," which will consist of seven
41 members, including the Commissioner of Health, or the
42 commissioner's designee; the Commissioner of Human Services, or
43 the commissioner's designee; one member to be appointed by the
44 President of the Senate; one member to be appointed by the
45 Minority Leader of the Senate; one member to be appointed by the
46 Speaker of the General Assembly; one member to be appointed by
47 the Minority Leader of the General Assembly; and one member to
48 be appointed by the Governor.

1 Under the resolution, the commission would study how certain
2 organizations, including hospitals, law enforcement agencies,
3 prosecutors' offices, and courts, train their employees to identify
4 and interact with people with autism, Down syndrome, and other
5 mental disorders.

6 The members of the commission are to be appointed within 60
7 days from the enactment of the resolution, and the commission is to
8 issue a report one year after the date of its organization. The
9 commission would submit the report, together with any
10 recommendations it may have for legislative or regulatory action, to
11 the Governor and the Legislature, and would dissolve 30 days after
12 the issuance of its final report.