

State of North Carolina

JOSH STEIN
GOVERNOR
WORLD AUTISM MONTH

2026

BY THE GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

A PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a neurological and developmental disorder that begins early in childhood and consists of a broad range of conditions characterized by challenges and differences with social skills, repetitive behaviors, speech, and nonverbal communication; and

WHEREAS, our state has a duty to ensure people on the autism spectrum have access to the care, services, and opportunities they need to be happy and to achieve their greatest potential; people with autism in North Carolina are eligible for critical support and services through North Carolina's Medicaid program; and

WHEREAS, many people with ASD in North Carolina rely on support from direct support professionals, or aid caregivers, to engage in community activities and manage daily tasks, and there is a significant shortage of direct support professionals due to low wages; and

WHEREAS, people with autism face challenges entering the workforce, and therefore programs such as the Linking North Carolina with Innovative Talent (LiNC-IT) employment collaborative, NC Career Advancement Resources for Employees on the Spectrum (NC CARES), the Access to Achievement pilot at community colleges across the state, Inclusive Postsecondary Education Programs at various public universities, and the NC Division of Employment and Independence for People with Disabilities create opportunities for education, employment, and advancement; and

WHEREAS, both Governor Cooper's Executive Order No. 92 Employment First for North Carolinians with Disabilities and the federal Americans with Disabilities Act discuss reasonable accommodations by employers; and employers are encouraged to modify their hiring practices to increase employment accessibility for North Carolinians who are on the autism spectrum; and

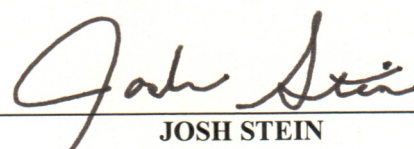
WHEREAS, to better serve North Carolinians who are on the autism spectrum, the NC Department of Public Safety provides innovative training to first responders called Helping Enhance Autism Response Training (HEART), which helps public safety officials, first responders, and law enforcement and correctional officers understand ASD and ways to assist these people during emergencies; and

WHEREAS, Governor Stein's Executive Order No. 33 charges DPS to provide voluntary training for law enforcement and other first responders on interacting with people who have developmental or cognitive differences; and

WHEREAS, the State of North Carolina joins in recognizing and raising awareness of the need for more research, better understanding, and greater acceptance of ASD and commending those working to support people with autism and their families;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JOSH STEIN, Governor of the State of North Carolina, do hereby proclaim April 2026 as "**WORLD AUTISM MONTH**" in North Carolina and commend its observance to all residents.





JOSH STEIN
Governor

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the Great Seal of the State of North Carolina at the Capitol in Raleigh this thirtieth day of March in the year of our Lord two thousand and twenty-sixth and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and fiftieth.