

2026 SESSION

INTRODUCED

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1 **SENATE BILL NO. 280**

2 Offered January 14, 2026

3 Prefiled January 14, 2026

4 A BILL to amend and reenact §§ 30-329.1 and 30-329.2 of the Code of Virginia, to amend the Code of
5 Virginia by adding in Chapter 50.1 of Title 30 a section numbered 30-329.5, and to repeal § 30-329.4 of
6 the Code of Virginia, relating to Autism Advisory Council; name change; membership; staffing; powers
7 and duties.

8 Patron—Aird

9
10 Referred to Committee on Rules

11 Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

12 1. That §§ 30-329.1 and 30-329.2 of the Code of Virginia are amended and reenacted and that the Code
13 of Virginia is amended by adding in Chapter 50.1 of Title 30 a section numbered 30-329.5 as follows:

14 CHAPTER 50.1.

15 **AUTISM ADVISORY COUNCIL COMMISSION.**

16 § 30-329.1. (Expires July 1, 2027) **Autism Commission; purpose; membership; staff.**

17 A. The Autism Advisory Council (the Council) Commission (the Commission) is established as an
18 advisory council in the legislative branch of state government. The purpose of the Commission is to promote
19 coordination of services and resources among agencies involved in the delivery of services to Virginians with
20 autism spectrum disorders and other developmental disabilities, to improve the quality of and access to such
21 services and resources, to address gaps in services and resources needed, and to increase public awareness
22 of such services and resources.

23 B. The Council Commission shall have a total membership of 12 members that shall consist of six
24 include nine legislative members; four and three nonlegislative citizen members; and seven ex officio
25 members. Members shall be appointed as follows: two members of the Senate to be appointed by the
26 Senate Committee on Rules; four members of the House of Delegates, to be appointed by the Speaker of
27 the House of Delegates in accordance with the principles of proportional representation contained in the
28 Rules of the House of Delegates; and three nonlegislative citizen members, of whom (i) two shall be
29 representatives of autism advocacy organizations, (ii) two shall be parents of children with autism, (iii) two
30 shall be persons with an autism spectrum disorder, (iv) one shall be a clinician in the autism field, (v) one
31 shall be a licensed behavior analyst, (vi) one shall be a private day school director, (vii) one shall be a public
32 school special education director, and (viii) two shall be representatives from autism programs at an
33 institution of higher education, to be appointed by the Governor. The Commissioner of Behavioral Health and
34 Developmental Services, the Commissioner for Aging and Rehabilitative Services, the Commissioner of
35 Health, the Commissioner of Social Services, the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the Executive Director
36 of the Virginia Board for People with Disabilities, and the Director of the Department of Medical Assistance
37 Services, or their designees, shall serve ex officio with voting privileges appointed by the Speaker of the
38 House of Delegates and one shall be appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules. In making such
39 appointments, the Speaker of the House of Delegates shall select one individual with an autism spectrum
40 disorder or a parent of an individual with spectrum disorder and one clinician in the field of autism, and the
41 Senate Committee on Rules shall select a representative of an autism advocacy organization. Nonlegislative
42 citizen members of the Council Commission shall be citizens of the Commonwealth. Unless otherwise
43 approved in writing by the chairman chair of the Council Commission and the respective Office of the Clerk
44 of the chair of the Commission, nonlegislative citizen members shall only be reimbursed for travel originating
45 and ending within the Commonwealth for the purpose of attending meetings.

46 C. Legislative and ex officio members shall serve terms coincident with their terms of office. All
47 appointments of nonlegislative citizen members shall be for four-year terms. Appointments to fill vacancies,
48 other than by expiration of a term, shall be for the unexpired terms. All members may be reappointed;
49 however, no citizen member shall serve more than two consecutive four-year terms. The remainder of any
50 term to which a member is appointed to fill a vacancy shall not constitute a term in determining the member's
51 term limit. Vacancies shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointments.

52 Legislative members of the Council Commission shall receive such compensation as provided in
53 § 30-19.12 and nonlegislative citizen members shall receive such compensation as provided in § 2.2-2813 for
54 their services. All members shall be reimbursed for all reasonable and necessary expenses incurred in the
55 performance of their duties as provided in §§ 2.2-2813 and 2.2-2825. However, all such compensation and
56 expense payments shall be paid from existing appropriations to the Council Commission or, if unfunded, shall
57 be approved by the Joint Rules Committee.

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59 D. The ~~Council~~ Commission shall elect a ~~chairman~~ chair and ~~vice-chairman~~ vice-chair annually, who
60 shall be members of the General Assembly. A majority of the members of the ~~Council~~ Commission shall
61 constitute a quorum. The ~~Council~~ Commission shall meet no less than five times a year, upon the call of the
62 ~~chairman~~ chair or a majority of the members.

63 E. ~~Administrative staff support shall be provided by the Office of the Clerk of the Senate or the Clerk of~~
64 ~~the House of Delegates, as may be appropriate for the house in which the chairman serves. The Division of~~
65 ~~Legislative Services shall provide legal, research, policy analysis, and other services as requested by the~~
66 ~~Council. The Commission may appoint and employ and, at its pleasure, remove an executive director and~~
67 ~~such other persons as it deems necessary to assist it in carrying out its duties as set forth in this chapter. The~~
68 ~~Commission may determine the duties of such staff and fix their salaries or compensation within the amounts~~
69 ~~appropriated therefor in the general appropriation act. If funds are not appropriated for staffing, the Joint~~
70 ~~Rules Committee shall determine the staffing support for the Commission.~~

71 F. No recommendation of the ~~Council~~ Commission shall be adopted if a majority of the legislative House
72 members or a majority of the Senate members appointed to the ~~Council~~ Commission (i) vote against the
73 recommendation and (ii) vote for the recommendation to fail notwithstanding the majority vote of the
74 ~~Council~~ Commission.

75 **§ 30-329.2. (Expires July 1, 2027) Powers and duties of the Commission; report.**

76 A. The ~~Council~~ Commission shall have the ~~power~~ following powers and ~~duty~~ to duties:

77 1. Facilitate the coordination of services and resources among agencies involved in the delivery of
78 services to Virginians with autism spectrum disorders and other developmental disabilities;

79 2. Monitor the implementation of action plans developed by agencies in response to the report of the Joint
80 Legislative Audit and Review Commission entitled "Assessment of Services for Virginians with Autism
81 Spectrum Disorders," House Document No. 8 (2009);

82 3. Recommend policies, legislation, and funding needed to implement the action plans developed in
83 response to the report of the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission entitled "Assessment of
84 Services for Virginians with Autism Spectrum Disorders," House Document No. 8 (2009) and address other
85 emerging issues; and

86 4. Examine the delivery of services and resources to individuals with autism spectrum disorders in other
87 states and exchange information on issues of mutual concern;

88 3. Recommend policies, legislation, and funding needed to improve the quality and availability of existing
89 services and resources; and

90 4. Determine services, resources, and policies that may further address the needs of individuals with
91 autism spectrum disorders and other developmental disabilities.

92 B. By December 1 of each year, the ~~Council~~ Commission shall submit to the Governor and the General
93 Assembly and to the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for publication as a House or Senate
94 document an annual report containing progress updates and recommended next steps to be taken by agencies
95 in the following year policies, legislation, and funding supports so identified.

96 **§ 30-329.5. Cooperation of other state agencies and political subdivisions.**

97 The Commission may request records, including data and information, that it may require for the
98 performance of its duties, and every department, division, board, bureau, commission, authority, or other
99 agency created by the Commonwealth or to which the Commonwealth is a party or any political subdivision
100 of the Commonwealth shall provide such records, including data and information, to the fullest extent
101 possible and except as prohibited by law. The Commission shall receive cooperation and assistance in the
102 performance of its duties from every department, division, board, bureau, commission, authority, or other
103 agency created by the Commonwealth or to which the Commonwealth is a party or from any political
104 subdivision of the Commonwealth upon request.

105 Upon request and availability, the Commission shall receive access to the facilities of and ample
106 opportunity to observe the operations of every department, division, board, bureau, commission, authority, or
107 other agency created by the Commonwealth or to which the Commonwealth is a party or of any political
108 subdivision of the Commonwealth.

109 **2. That § 30-329.4 of the Code of Virginia is repealed.**

110 **3. That the terms of office of any nonlegislative citizen member serving on the Autism Advisory**
111 **Council as of June 30, 2026, shall expire on the effective date of this act, but such persons shall be**
112 **eligible in accordance with § 30-329.1 of the Code of Virginia, as amended by this act, to be appointed**
113 **to the Autism Commission and serve two consecutive four-year terms notwithstanding any prior**
114 **service on the Autism Advisory Council.**