

1 S.244

2 Introduced by Senator Giard

3 Referred to Committee on

4 Date:

5 Subject: Autism spectrum disorders; pilot regional center on autism spectrum  
6 disorders

7 Statement of purpose: This bill proposes to require the agencies of human  
8 services, of commerce and community development, and of transportation and  
9 the departments of education and of labor to select and oversee a nonprofit  
10 entity that will develop and implement a pilot center on autism spectrum  
11 disorders (ASD) pursuant to a contract with and funding from the agency of  
12 human services. Among its duties, the pilot center would:

13 (1) provide lifelong individualized support and services to children and  
14 adults with ASD and their families, including vocational and other supports for  
15 individuals with ASD as they transition to adulthood;

16 (2) educate potential employers, colleges, transportation providers, first  
17 responders, and others about ASD and assist them to develop necessary  
18 accommodations, protocols, and staff training to address the special needs of  
19 individuals with ASD; and

20 (3) work with private and public entities to develop safe,  
21 community-based housing for adults with ASD.

1           An act relating to creating a pilot regional center on autism spectrum  
2           disorders to serve Chittenden County

3           It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

4           Sec. 1. PILOT REGIONAL CENTER ON AUTISM SPECTRUM  
5                           DISORDERS

6           (a) The agencies of human services, of commerce and community  
7           development, and of transportation and the departments of education and of  
8           labor (collectively “the planning committee”) shall cooperatively establish a  
9           pilot regional center on autism spectrum disorders to provide lifelong services  
10          to children and adults with autism spectrum disorders (“ASD”) and their  
11          families in Chittenden County. The agency of human services shall act as the  
12          lead agency.

13          (b) On or before December 31, 2010, the agency of human services shall  
14          contract with a Vermont-based nonprofit entity to operate the center and to  
15          develop the programs it offers.

16          (c) The planning committee shall:

17                  (1) develop and implement a process by which it will select a nonprofit  
18                  entity to develop and operate the pilot center;

19                  (2) provide guidance and other assistance to the pilot center, when  
20                  requested;

21                  (3) oversee the work performed by the pilot center;

1           (4) arrange for an annual financial audit of the pilot center, which shall  
2           be conducted according to generally accepted government auditing standards  
3           and made publicly available on the websites maintained by each member of the  
4           planning group;

5           (5) examine and make policy recommendations to the general assembly  
6           and state agencies regarding the care, treatment, and quality of life of  
7           individuals with ASD and their families and the use of public funds in  
8           connection with ASD;

9           (6) develop a proposed plan to create additional regional centers across  
10          the state to ensure that services are available to individuals with ASD and their  
11          families in an equitable manner; and

12          (7) report to the governor and the general assembly between January 1  
13          and January 15 each year beginning in 2011 regarding its activities and the  
14          activities of the pilot center.

15          (d) At a minimum, the pilot center shall:

16               (1) create and maintain a centralized, publicly available information  
17               system regarding evidence-based diagnostics, prognosis, options for treatment  
18               and education, available resources, parent support programs, and community  
19               activity programs in Vermont;

1           (2) provide, coordinate with other entities to provide, or provide  
2           consulting services to schools and other entities to ensure individualized  
3           supports and services to individuals with ASD and their families, including:

4                   (A) systematic evidence-based instructional programs,  
5           comprehensive structured learning environments, specific curriculum content,  
6           and functional approaches to behavioral issues;

7                   (B) transitional plans related to socialization, job training and  
8           employment, and independent living in a community-based format to assist  
9           individuals with ASD to move from secondary school into the community;

10                   (C) community-based services to individuals with ASD who are 23  
11           years old and older, to individuals with ASD who will soon be 23 years old,  
12           and to their families, including residential, medical, job training and  
13           employment support services, and socialization programs;

14                   (D) training and support necessary to ensure that families of  
15           individuals with ASD can assume case management responsibilities if they  
16           desire to do so; and

17                   (E) mediation and advocacy services, as needed, to ensure that  
18           individuals with ASD and their families receive appropriate supports and  
19           services;

20           (3) assist schools, colleges, and other entities to develop and implement  
21           education and training programs necessary to ensure a sufficient number of

1 well-trained and experienced staff for schools, health service entities, and  
2 social and housing agencies;

3 (4) assist schools, colleges, and other entities to develop and implement  
4 postsecondary education and training programs for individuals with ASD that  
5 include the necessary accommodations, protocols, and staff training to address  
6 the special needs of individuals with ASD;

7 (5) educate potential employers about ASD and assist them to develop  
8 necessary accommodations, protocols, and training to address the special needs  
9 of individuals with ASD;

10 (6) create and foster links between potential employers and the  
11 educational community;

12 (7) educate first responders about ASD and assist them to develop  
13 necessary accommodations, protocols, and training to address the special needs  
14 of individuals with ASD;

15 (8) educate transportation providers about ASD and assist them to  
16 develop necessary accommodations, protocols, and training to address the  
17 special needs of individuals with ASD;

18 (9) work with private and public entities to develop safe,  
19 community-based housing for adults with ASD;

20 (10) provide or coordinate with other entities to provide information to  
21 the general public about ASD and the special needs of individuals with ASD;

1           (11) promote coordination and collaboration among educational and  
2 social service agencies and independent providers;

3           (12) seek increased resources for individuals with ASD and their  
4 families by accessing federal and state grants and pursuing development  
5 opportunities through foundations, corporations, and planned giving; and

6           (13) provide quarterly reports to the planning committee and to the  
7 Vermont interagency autism spectrum disorder planning advisory committee  
8 that include data and are in a format prescribed by the planning committee.

9           (e) On or before February 28, 2011, the selected nonprofit entity shall  
10 develop and begin to implement a detailed plan to satisfy all requirements of  
11 subsection (d) of this section. The entity shall provide copies of the plan to the  
12 planning group, the governor, and the general assembly on or before that date.

13           (f) On or before January 15, 2012, the planning committee shall provide to  
14 the governor and the general assembly a proposed plan to create additional  
15 regional centers across the state to ensure that services are available to  
16 individuals with ASD and their families in an equitable manner.

17           (g) The agency of human services shall provide all funds necessary for the  
18 center's operation and for the annual audit required by this section from  
19 general fund dollars and Medicaid revenues.

20       Sec. 2. EFFECTIVE DATE

21           This act shall take effect from passage.