



ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE of PENNSYLVANIA COURTS

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Pennsylvania Supreme Court Recognizes Autism Acceptance Month

HARRISBURG, PA – In a demonstration of its ongoing efforts to create a more understanding and accommodating court system, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court has formally recognized April as Autism Acceptance Month with the issuance of an official [citation](#).

The citation emphasizes the importance of creating inclusive environments, supporting equal opportunities and treating all individuals with dignity and respect. It celebrates the contributions of advocates and self-advocates and reaffirms the Court's commitment to awareness and acceptance within public service and the legal system.

"Autism Acceptance Month is a powerful reminder that our justice system must serve every Pennsylvanian with dignity, fairness and compassion," said Chief Justice Debra Todd. "We are proud to support efforts that promote awareness, education and inclusivity, and to support the autism community."

The recognition builds upon the work of Justice Kevin Dougherty, who has spearheaded the Autism in the Courts initiative since 2019. The program has focused on identifying barriers faced by individuals with autism within the legal system, improving training for court personnel and promoting best practices for communication and accessibility.

"This citation is not just symbolic – it's a statement of our values," said Justice Dougherty. "Through the Autism in the Courts initiative, we've listened to families, professionals and individuals with autism to understand how we can better serve them. We are committed to building a judiciary where every person is seen, heard and supported."

The Court's initiative has led to collaboration with stakeholders statewide, the development of educational resources for judges and court staff, and efforts to encourage greater public understanding of neurodiversity within the justice system. As the Commonwealth observes Autism Acceptance Month, the Pennsylvania Courts reaffirm their dedication to fostering an inclusive environment – one where all individuals, regardless of ability, have equal access to justice.

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