# Support Autism Data Collection in Virginia

## HB2285 – Delegate Coyner (Chief Patron)

**Autism prevalence rates are rising nationwide, but Virginia currently lacks a clear picture of how many individuals are affected and what their needs are.** This bill directs the Autism Advisory Council to study and develop recommendations pertaining to the creation of an autism data dashboard to provide transparency and insights into autism trends across the Commonwealth. By collecting and monitoring data, the dashboard will empower policymakers to make informed, evidence-based decisions to improve services, identify gaps in resources, and ensure equitable access to support for individuals and families.

### Why Collecting Autism Data Matters:

- **Prevalence Rates Are Rising:** Autism diagnoses are increasing, yet we don't know how many individuals in Virginia are affected. Collecting data will provide a clear understanding of autism trends and help plan for the growing demand for services.
- **Empowering Legislators to Make Informed Decisions:** Reliable data allows policymakers to allocate resources effectively, create evidence-based policies, and address the needs of individuals with autism and their families.
- **Improving Access and Equity in Services:** Data identifies service gaps, disparities, and the diverse needs across the autism spectrum, enabling equitable access to services for individuals in all communities, including rural and underrepresented areas.
- **Planning for the Future:** Monitoring autism prevalence and service utilization helps Virginia prepare for long-term needs, such as education, healthcare, housing, and workforce development.
- **Enhancing Early Diagnosis and Intervention:** Data uncovers barriers to early diagnosis and intervention, which are essential for empowering self-advocacy and enhancing access to necessary accommodations, which also guides outreach to underserved populations.

- **Strengthening Support Systems Across the Lifespan:** Accurate data allows schools, employers, and providers to design effective programs and accommodations, ensuring smoother transitions throughout life stages, including school-to-work and independent living.
- **Supporting Families and Caregivers:** Families often struggle to navigate complex systems. Data helps identify common obstacles, improve care coordination, and provide tailored resources to support families effectively.
- **Reducing Long-Term Costs Through Strategic Investment:** Data-driven decisions support early interventions and services, reducing long-term costs by minimizing crisis care and increasing independence for individuals with autism.

**Take Action:** Support this critical effort to enhance services, improve equity, and ensure a brighter future for individuals with autism in Virginia. Together, we can build a future where every need is understood and met!

**Autism Society of Central Virginia**
8730 Stony Point Pkwy, Ste 150
Richmond, VA 23235
(804) 259-3188  |  info@ascv.org