

2016708er

1  
2 An act relating to the Arthur G. Dozier School for  
3 Boys; requiring certain historical resources, records,  
4 archives, artifacts, researches, medical records, and  
5 human remains to remain in the custody of the  
6 University of South Florida; providing exceptions;  
7 requiring the Department of State to contract with the  
8 university for the identification and location of  
9 eligible next of kin of certain children; requiring  
10 the department to notify the next of kin of certain  
11 payment or reimbursement provisions; requiring the  
12 department to reimburse the next of kin of children  
13 whose bodies are buried and exhumed at the Dozier  
14 School or to pay directly to a provider for the costs  
15 associated with funeral services, reinterment, and  
16 grave marker expenses; providing a process for  
17 reimbursement or payment by the department; providing  
18 that a charitable donation made toward funeral,  
19 reinterment, and grave marker expenses is not eligible  
20 for reimbursement; requiring the department to submit  
21 a report; establishing a task force to make  
22 recommendations regarding a memorial and a location of  
23 a site for the reinterment of unidentified or  
24 unclaimed remains; providing membership of the task  
25 force; requiring the task force to submit its  
26 recommendation to the department by a certain date;  
27 requiring the task force to submit its recommendations  
28 to the Governor and Cabinet and to the Legislature;  
29 authorizing the department to adopt rules; providing

2016708er

30 appropriations; providing an effective date.

31 WHEREAS, the Arthur G. Dozier School for Boys, or the  
32 Dozier School for Boys, operated from 1900 until it was closed  
33 in 2011 after allegations of abuse were confirmed in separate  
34 investigations by the Department of Law Enforcement in 2010 and  
35 the Civil Rights Division of the United States Department of  
36 Justice in 2011, and

37 WHEREAS, official records indicated that 31 graves had been  
38 dug at the facility between 1914 and 1952, and

39 WHEREAS, a forensic investigation by the University of  
40 South Florida found that there are no records of where children  
41 who died at the Dozier School for Boys are buried and that  
42 families were often notified after the child was buried or  
43 denied access to their remains at the time of burial, and

44 WHEREAS, exhumations of bodies began in August 2013, and  
45 the excavations yielded 55 burial sites, 24 more sites than  
46 reported in official records, and

47 WHEREAS, one of the bodies exhumed during the forensic  
48 investigation was of a child reported missing since 1940, and

49 WHEREAS, nearly 100 deaths were recorded at the school and  
50 51 sets of remains were exhumed from burials, and additional  
51 victims of a fatal fire in 1914 are still buried with the fire  
52 debris on site, and

53 WHEREAS, many families of children whose bodies have been  
54 exhumed lack the resources to properly reinter those children at  
55 a suitable location, and

56 WHEREAS, the State of Florida recognizes an obligation to  
57 help the families of children formerly buried at the Dozier  
58 School for Boys reinter the bodies of those children, NOW,

2016708er

59 THEREFORE,

60 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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62 Section 1. (1) (a) Any historical resource, record, archive,  
63 artifact, public research, or medical record that was recovered  
64 from the Arthur G. Dozier School for Boys by the University of  
65 South Florida shall remain in the custody of the university for  
66 archival and preservation until the Department of State requests  
67 custody of such resource, record, archive, artifact, public  
68 research, or medical record.

69 (b) Any human remains exhumed from the Arthur G. Dozier  
70 School for Boys by the University of South Florida shall remain  
71 in the custody of the university for identification purposes  
72 until the remains are returned to the next of kin or reburied  
73 pursuant to this act.

74 (2) (a) The Department of State shall contract with the  
75 University of South Florida for the identification and location  
76 of eligible next of kin for such children and the update of  
77 information on associated artifacts and materials.

78 (b) No later than July 1, 2016, the University of South  
79 Florida must provide the Department of State with contact  
80 information for the next of kin for each set of human remains  
81 which has been returned to a next to kin.

82 (c) For any identification of next of kin occurring on or  
83 after July 1, 2016, the University of South Florida must provide  
84 location information of the next of kin to the Department of  
85 State at least 5 days before returning the human remains to the  
86 next of kin.

87 (d) Beginning July 1, 2016, the Department of State must

2016708er

88 notify the next of kin responsible for a set of human remains  
89 about the payment or reimbursement provisions under subsection  
90 (3). Such notification must be made within 15 business days  
91 after the department's receipt of the location information of  
92 the next of kin.

93 (3) The Department of State shall reimburse the next of kin  
94 or pay directly to the provider up to \$7,500 for funeral,  
95 reinterment, and grave marker expenses for each child whose body  
96 was buried at and exhumed, or otherwise recovered, from the  
97 Dozier School for Boys.

98 (a) In order to receive reimbursement, the next of kin must  
99 submit to the department receipts for, or documentation of,  
100 expenses. Reimbursement shall be made pursuant to s. 215.422,  
101 Florida Statutes.

102 (b) If expenses are to be paid directly to the provider,  
103 the funeral home or other similar entity must submit an invoice  
104 to the department for the cost of the child's funeral,  
105 reinterment, and grave marker expenses. Payment shall be made  
106 pursuant to s. 215.422, Florida Statutes.

107 (c) A charitable donation made toward funeral, reinterment,  
108 and grave marker expenses is not eligible for reimbursement.

109 (4) By February 1, 2018, the Department of State shall  
110 submit a report to the Governor and Cabinet, the President of  
111 the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives  
112 regarding any payments and reimbursements made pursuant to this  
113 section.

114 (5) The department may adopt rules necessary to administer  
115 this section.

116 Section 2. (1) A task force is established adjunct to the

2016708er

117 Department of State to advise the department and, except as  
118 otherwise provided in this section, shall operate consistent  
119 with s. 20.052, Florida Statutes. The task force shall be known  
120 as the "Dozier Task Force." The Department of State shall  
121 provide administrative and staff support services relating to  
122 the functions of the task force.

123 (2) (a) The task force shall consist of the following  
124 members:

125 1. The Secretary of State, or his or her designee, who  
126 shall serve as the chair.

127 2. One person appointed by the President of the Florida  
128 State Conference of the National Association for the Advancement  
129 of Colored People.

130 3. One representative of the Florida Council of Churches,  
131 appointed by the executive director of the council.

132 4. A next of kin of a deceased ward buried at the Dozier  
133 School for Boys appointed by the Attorney General.

134 5. One representative who promotes the welfare of people  
135 who are former wards of the Dozier School for Boys appointed by  
136 the Chief Financial Officer.

137 6. One person appointed by the President of the Senate.

138 7. One person appointed by the Speaker of the House of  
139 Representatives.

140 8. One person appointed by the Jackson County Board of  
141 County Commissioners.

142 9. One person who represents a youth development  
143 organization that promotes the welfare of at-risk youth,  
144 appointed by the Commissioner of Agriculture.

145 (b) By October 1, 2016, the task force shall submit its

2016708er

146 recommendations to the Department of State regarding the  
147 creation and maintenance of a memorial and the location of a  
148 site for the reinterment of unidentified or unclaimed remains.  
149 The recommendations shall also be submitted to the Governor and  
150 Cabinet, the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House  
151 of Representatives, the Minority Leader of the Senate, and the  
152 Minority Leader of the House of Representatives.

153 (3) This section is repealed December 31, 2016.

154 Section 3. For the 2016-2017 fiscal year, the sum of  
155 \$500,000 in nonrecurring funds is appropriated from the General  
156 Revenue Fund to the Department of State for the purpose of  
157 implementing this act. Funds remaining unexpended or  
158 unencumbered from this appropriation as of July 1, 2017, shall  
159 revert and be reappropriated for the same purpose in the 2017-  
160 2018 fiscal year.

161 Section 4. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law.