

THE FLORIDA SENATE  
2026 SUMMARY OF LEGISLATION PASSED  
**Committee on Education Postsecondary**

**HB 1405 — Statewide Project for Missing Persons with Special Needs**

by Rep. Duggan and others (SB 1570 by Senators Gaetz and Berman)

The bill re-establishes the Missing Persons with Special Needs Statewide Project (“Project Leo”), which was repealed in 2019. Project Leo is administered through selected service-area centers for autism and related disabilities.

The bill requires each participating Center for Autism and Related Disabilities (CARD or center) to develop criteria for selecting individuals for participation in the project, which must account for an individual’s risk of elopement. The project is implemented on a first-come, first-served basis to the extent funding is available. Participation is voluntary and provided at no cost to the participant.

The bill requires each participating CARD to provide personal search-and-rescue devices to the sheriff’s offices of participating counties. The bill requires county sheriffs’ offices to distribute the devices to project participants in coordination with the respective CARD. The participating CARD is also required to fund any costs associated with monitoring the devices.

Additionally, the bill appropriates \$1 million in nonrecurring General Revenue funds for the 2026-2027 fiscal year, allocating \$250,000 each to the University of Florida, Florida Atlantic University, University of South Florida, and Florida State University centers, to be used solely for the purchase of personal search-and-rescue devices.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect on July 1, 2026.

*Vote: Senate 38-0; House 109-0*