

Committee on Criminal Justice

CS/SB 1332 — Missing Persons

by Criminal Justice Committee and Senator Martin

The bill (Chapter 2023-54, L.O.F.) amends s. 937.021, F.S., which requires law enforcement agencies in the state to adopt written policies that specify the procedures to be used to investigate reports of missing children and missing adults. The bill requires that the policies include standards for maintaining and clearing computer data of information concerning a missing child or missing adult which is stored in the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs), a national information clearinghouse and resource center for missing, unidentified, and unclaimed person cases across the United States. The standards must require, at a minimum, a monthly review of each case and a determination of whether the case should be maintained in NamUs.

The bill also amends s. 937.021, F.S., to do all of the following:

- Prohibit the removal of a missing child or missing adult entry on the NamUs database based solely on the age of the missing child or missing adult.
- Require a law enforcement agency, within 2 hours after receipt of a report of a missing child from a parent or guardian, the Department of Children and Families (DCF), a community-based care provider, or a sheriff's office providing investigative services for the DCF, to transmit that report for inclusion in the NamUs database.
- Require a law enforcement agency, within 2 hours after receipt of a credible police report that an adult is missing, to transmit the report for inclusion in the NamUs database.

Finally, the bill amends s. 937.022, F.S., which pertains to the Missing Endangered Persons Information Clearinghouse (Clearinghouse), to do all of the following:

- Provide that entry of a law enforcement agency's report regarding a missing child or missing adult younger than 26 years of age into the NamUs database is one of the conditions precedent to submitting the report on the missing child or missing adult to the Clearinghouse.
- Require the law enforcement agency having jurisdiction over a case involving a missing endangered person to, upon locating the child or adult, purge information about the case from the NamUs and notify the Clearinghouse.

These provisions were approved by the Governor and take effect July 1, 2023.

Vote: Senate 40-0; House 117-0