

By the Committees on Children, Families, and Elder Affairs; and Criminal Justice; and Senator Dean

586-03792-15

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2 A bill to be entitled

3 An act relating to missing persons with special needs;
4 creating s. 937.041, F.S.; establishing a pilot
5 program in specified counties for the purpose of
6 providing personal assistive technology devices to
7 persons with special needs to aid in certain search
8 and rescue efforts; providing for administration of
9 the pilot program; requiring submittal of certain
10 reports to the Governor and the Legislature by
11 specified dates; providing for expiration of the pilot
12 program; providing an effective date.

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

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16 Section 1. Section 937.041, Florida Statutes, is created to
17 read:

18 937.041 Missing person with special needs pilot program.—

19 (1) There is created a pilot program in Baker, Columbia,
20 Hamilton, and Suwannee Counties to be known as Project Leo for
21 the purpose of providing personal assistive technology devices
22 to aid search and rescue efforts for persons with special needs
23 in the case of elopement.

24 (2) Participants for the pilot program shall be selected
25 based on criteria developed by the Center for Autism and Related
26 Disabilities at the University of Florida. Criteria for
27 participation must include, at a minimum, the individual's risk
28 of elopement. The qualifying participants shall be selected on a
29 first-come, first-served basis by the center to the extent of

586-03792-15

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30 available funding within the center's existing resources. The
31 pilot program shall be voluntary and free to participants.

32 (3) Under the pilot program, personal devices to aid search
33 and rescue efforts that are attachable to clothing or otherwise
34 worn shall be provided by the center to the sheriff's offices of
35 the participating counties. The devices shall be distributed to
36 participants by the county sheriff's offices in conjunction with
37 the center. The center shall fund any costs associated with
38 monitoring the devices.

39 (4) The center shall submit a preliminary report by
40 December 1, 2015, and a final report by December 15, 2016, to
41 the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of
42 the House of Representatives describing the implementation and
43 operation of the pilot program. At a minimum, the report must
44 include the criteria used to select participants, the number of
45 participants, the age of the participants, the nature of the
46 participants' special needs, the number of participants who
47 elope, the amount of time taken to rescue participants following
48 elopement, and the outcome of any rescue attempts. The final
49 report must also provide recommendations for modification or
50 continued implementation of the pilot program.

51 (5) The pilot program shall operate to the extent of
52 available funding within the center's existing resources.

53 (6) This section expires June 30, 2017.

54 Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2015.