

HB 533

2016

1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to the Arthur G. Dozier School for
3 Boys; directing the Department of State to preserve
4 historical resources, records, archives, and
5 artifacts, to create and maintain a memorial to
6 victims, and to continue research into events that
7 occurred and development of evidence of abuse at the
8 school; authorizing payments to families of children
9 buried at the school for specified purposes; providing
10 an appropriation; providing for the carryforward and
11 use of unexpended appropriations; providing an
12 effective date.

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14 WHEREAS, the Arthur G. Dozier School for Boys operated from
15 1900 until its closing in 2011 by the state after allegations of
16 abuse were confirmed by separate investigations by the
17 Department of Law Enforcement in 2010 and the Civil Rights
18 Division of the United States Department of Justice in 2011, and

19 WHEREAS, official records indicated that 32 graves at the
20 facility had been dug between 1914 and 1952, and

21 WHEREAS, a University of South Florida forensic
22 investigation found that there were no records of where those
23 who died there are buried, and that a second cemetery is likely
24 to exist, and

25 WHEREAS, exhumations of bodies began in August 2013, and
 26 the excavations yielded remains of 55 bodies, which is almost
 27 twice the number official records had indicated, and

28 WHEREAS, one of the bodies exhumed during the forensic
 29 investigation was that of a child who the Arthur G. Dozier
 30 School for Boys had reported missing since 1940, and

31 WHEREAS, representatives of children formerly held at the
 32 Arthur G. Dozier School for Boys have estimated that there could
 33 be 100 more bodies buried on the school grounds, and

34 WHEREAS, the families of many children whose bodies have
 35 been exhumed lack the resources to properly reinter those
 36 children near their own families, and

37 WHEREAS, the State of Florida recognizes an equitable
 38 obligation to help the families of children formerly buried at
 39 the Arthur G. Dozier School for Boys to reinter the bodies of
 40 those children, NOW, THEREFORE,

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

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44 Section 1. The Department of State is directed to preserve
 45 historical resources, records, archives, and artifacts, to
 46 create and maintain a memorial to victims, and to continue
 47 research into events at the Arthur G. Dozier School for Boys and
 48 development of evidence of abuse that may have taken place
 49 there.

50 Section 2. The Department of State is authorized and

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51 directed to pay \$5,000 to the family of each child buried at the
52 Arthur G. Dozier School for Boys for the purpose of reintering
53 the bodies of said children in a cemetery of each family's
54 choice. The Department of State shall identify and locate
55 eligible families within 6 months after the effective date of
56 this act and shall provide the burial funding to the eligible
57 families no later than December 31, 2017.

58 Section 3. For fiscal year 2016-2017, \$1.5 million is
59 appropriated from the General Revenue Fund to implement this
60 act. Funds appropriated to the Department of State that are not
61 used by the department during fiscal year 2016-2017 shall be
62 carried forward by the department for the purpose of reintering
63 the bodies of children as provided in this act until the period
64 for locating eligible families under this act has expired.

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