

By Senator Fasano

11-393A-07

1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to an electronic monitoring
3 program for tracking lost persons; providing
4 legislative intent to encourage counties to
5 implement county lifesaver projects; describing
6 the components of such a project; designating
7 the Department of Law Enforcement as the
8 administrative agency; providing procedures for
9 starting the program in a county; providing for
10 applying for state grant funds and requiring
11 local matching funds; providing for
12 prioritizing and prorating grants; requiring
13 the county sheriff's office or other lead
14 agency to use the funds for specified purchases
15 and training; requiring the solicitation of
16 private moneys and the achievement of financial
17 independence for the program within a specified
18 time; providing an effective date.

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20 WHEREAS, more than 5 million United States residents
21 have Alzheimer's disease and more than 50 percent of those
22 individuals wander and become lost, and

23 WHEREAS, autism is the fastest-growing serious
24 developmental disability in the United States, and many
25 autistic individuals wander and are attracted to water,
26 causing drowning to be the leading cause of death for children
27 who have autism, and

28 WHEREAS, Project Lifesaver is a search-and-rescue
29 program that can quickly find wandering individuals who have
30 Alzheimer's disease, autism, Down's syndrome, or other mental
31 impairments, and

1 WHEREAS, Project Lifesaver was established in Virginia
2 in 1999 and has been implemented by law enforcement agencies
3 and public safety agencies across the country, and

4 WHEREAS, agencies that sponsor local lifesaver projects
5 have stated that the program materially reduces the time
6 required to find lost persons, often to less than one-half
7 hour after the person is reported missing, within which period
8 there is a 100-percent recovery rate, and

9 WHEREAS, 13 Florida counties and 5 police departments
10 have implemented a version of Project Lifesaver, and Pasco
11 County residents have taken the lead in extending the program
12 statewide, NOW, THEREFORE,

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

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16 Section 1. Project Lifesaver; legislative intent;
17 administration; grants to counties; program requirements.--

18 (1) The Legislature encourages each county in this
19 state to implement a county lifesaver project that is modeled
20 after Project Lifesaver, a search-and-rescue program designed
21 to quickly find a lost or wandering person who is mentally
22 impaired due to Alzheimer's disease, autism, Down's syndrome,
23 or other causes. The program uses small transmitters, which
24 are usually worn on a participant's wrist, to electronically
25 track lost or wandering participants. A law enforcement
26 agency, usually the sheriff's office, is equipped with
27 receivers that track the transmitters.

28 (2) The Department of Law Enforcement shall serve as
29 the liaison to county lifesaver projects and shall administer
30 the state grant moneys awarded for the purpose of starting the
31 projects. The maximum amount that a county may receive for

1 startup is \$10,000, and the amount awarded must be matched
2 50-50 by county funds, such as funds obtained from the
3 forfeited property of drug dealers.

4 (3) To initiate Project Lifesaver in a county, the
5 sheriff's office must approve the implementation. If the
6 county approves initiating the project in the 2007-2008 fiscal
7 year, the sheriff's office must, by October 1, 2008, submit to
8 the department an application that includes:

9 (a) An estimate of the number of people who might
10 qualify for assistance;

11 (b) An estimate of the startup cost;

12 (c) A statement of the number of personnel available
13 for tracking lost individuals; and

14 (d) The source or sources and the amount of local
15 funds available for matching state grant moneys.

16 (4) The department must prioritize the grant awards in
17 accordance with the respective counties' needs for tracking
18 services and the availability of local funding sources, as
19 documented in the applications. Awards to qualifying counties
20 must be prorated in accordance with the availability of state
21 funds.

22 (5) With the initial grant money and local matching
23 funds, the county sheriff's office shall purchase emergency
24 response kits, which include equipment necessary to track and
25 triangulate searches, as well as transmitters, and shall
26 provide 3 days' training for up to 17 deputies. Through its
27 community resource officer, the sheriff's office shall solicit
28 moneys from private sources so as to assure that within 3
29 years the program will be self-supporting and will not require
30 state funding.

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1 Section 2. The sum of \$670,000 is appropriated from
2 the General Revenue Fund to the Department of Law Enforcement
3 for the purpose of awarding grants to counties that qualify
4 under this act to start county lifesaver projects during the
5 2007-2008 fiscal year.

6 Section 3. This act shall take effect July 1, 2007.

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9 SENATE SUMMARY

10 Provides legislative intent to encourage counties to
11 implement county lifesaver projects, which are electronic
12 monitoring programs for tracking lost persons who have a
13 mental disability such as Alzheimer's disease, autism, or
14 Down's syndrome. Designates the Department of Law
15 Enforcement as the administrative agency. Provides
16 procedures for starting the program in a county. Provides
17 procedures for applying for state grant funds and
18 requires local matching funds. Provides for prioritizing
19 and prorating grants. Requires the lead agency, which
20 will usually be the county sheriff's office, to use the
21 funds for specified purchases and training. Requires the
22 solicitation of private moneys and the achievement of
23 financial independence for the program within 3 years.
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