

By Senator Fasano

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1 A bill to be entitled

2 An act relating to an electronic monitoring program for
3 tracking lost persons; establishing a grant program to
4 encourage counties to implement county lifesaver programs;
5 describing the components of the program; designating the
6 Department of Law Enforcement as the administrative
7 agency; providing for application for state grant funds
8 and requiring local matching funds; providing a cap on the
9 amount of a grant and for prioritizing and prorating
10 grants; requiring the county sheriff's office or other
11 lead agency to use the funds for purchasing equipment and
12 training; requiring the solicitation of private moneys and
13 the achievement of financial independence for the program
14 within a specified time; providing an effective date.

15
16 WHEREAS, more than 5 million United States residents have
17 Alzheimer's disease and more than 50 percent of those individuals
18 wander and become lost, and

19 WHEREAS, autism is the fastest-growing serious developmental
20 disability in the United States and many autistic individuals
21 wander and are attracted to water, causing drowning to be the
22 leading cause of death for children who have autism, and

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

26 WHEREAS, Project Lifesaver was established in Virginia in
27 1999 and has been implemented by law enforcement agencies and
28 public safety agencies across the country, and

29 WHEREAS, agencies that sponsor local lifesaver programs have

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30 | stated that the program materially reduces the time required to
31 | find lost persons, often to less than ½ hour after the person is
32 | reported missing, within which period there is a 100 percent
33 | recovery rate, and

34 | WHEREAS, 16 Florida counties and 5 police departments have
35 | implemented lifesaver programs, NOW, THEREFORE,

36 |
37 | Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

38 |
39 | Section 1. Lifesaver program grants.--

40 | (1) A state grant program is established to encourage each
41 | county in this state to implement a lifesaver program that is
42 | modeled after Project Lifesaver, a search-and-rescue program
43 | designed to quickly find a lost or wandering person who is
44 | mentally impaired due to Alzheimer's disease, autism, Down
45 | syndrome, or other causes. The program uses small transmitters,
46 | which are usually worn on a participant's wrist, to
47 | electronically track lost or wandering participants. A county
48 | sheriff's office or other lead agency is equipped with receivers
49 | that track the transmitters.

50 | (2) The Department of Law Enforcement shall administer the
51 | grant program, manage the state moneys appropriated for the
52 | purpose of starting county programs, and serve as a liaison to
53 | county lifesaver programs.

54 | (3) To apply for state grant moneys for implementing a
55 | county lifesaver program, a county sheriff's office or other lead
56 | agency must submit an application annually by October 1, which
57 | includes:

58 | (a) An estimate of the number of people who might qualify

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59 for lifesaver assistance;

60 (b) An estimate of the startup cost;

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

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

65 (4) The department shall prioritize the grant moneys in
66 accordance with the respective counties' needs for tracking
67 services, the availability of local sources to provide matching
68 funds, and the date the application was received by the
69 department. The maximum grant that a county may receive for
70 startup is \$10,000, and the amount awarded must be matched,
71 dollar for dollar, by local funds. Grants awarded to qualifying
72 counties must be prorated in accordance with the availability of
73 state funds.

74 (5) The county sheriff's office or other lead agency shall
75 use the grant money and matching funds to purchase the necessary
76 equipment and training to implement a county lifesaver program.
77 Through its community resource officer, the sheriff's office or
78 other lead agency shall solicit moneys from private sources so as
79 to ensure that within 3 years the lifesaver program is self-
80 supporting and no longer requires state funding.

81 Section 2. The sum of \$670,000 is appropriated from the
82 General Revenue Fund to the Department of Law Enforcement for the
83 2008-2009 fiscal year for the purpose of awarding grants to
84 counties that qualify under this act to start a county lifesaver
85 program.

86 Section 3. This act shall take effect July 1, 2008.