

1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to missing persons with special needs;
3 creating s. 937.041, F.S.; creating a pilot project in
4 specified counties to provide personal devices to aid
5 search-and-rescue efforts for persons with special
6 needs; providing for administration of the project;
7 requiring reports; providing for expiration; providing
8 an effective date.

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

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12 Section 1. Section 937.041, Florida Statutes, is created
13 to read:

14 937.041 Missing persons with special needs pilot project.-

15 (1) There is created a pilot project in Baker, Columbia,
16 Hamilton, and Suwannee Counties to be known as "Project Leo" to
17 provide personal devices to aid search-and-rescue efforts for
18 persons with special needs in the case of elopement.

19 (2) Participants for the pilot project shall be selected
20 based on criteria developed by the Center for Autism and Related
21 Disabilities at the University of Florida. Criteria for
22 participation shall include, at a minimum, the person's risk of
23 elopement. The qualifying participants shall be selected on a
24 first-come, first-served basis by the center to the extent of
25 available funding within the center's existing resources. The
26 project shall be voluntary and free to participants.

27 (3) Under the pilot project, personal devices to aid
28 search-and-rescue efforts that are attachable to clothing or
29 otherwise worn shall be provided by the center to the sheriff's
30 offices of the participating counties. The devices shall be
31 distributed to project participants by the county sheriff's
32 offices in conjunction with the center. The center shall fund
33 any costs associated with monitoring the devices.

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

46 (5) The project shall operate to the extent of available
47 funding within the center's existing resources.

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

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