

By Senator Dean

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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 appropriation; providing an effective date.

9  
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 to  
13 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

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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, 2016, and a final report by December 15, 2017, 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, 2018.

49 Section 2. For the 2016-2017 fiscal year, the sum of  
50 \$100,000 is appropriated from the General Revenue Fund to the  
51 Center for Autism and Related Disabilities at the University of  
52 Florida for the purpose of implementing this act.

53 Section 3. This act shall take effect July 1, 2016.