

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; directing the department to reimburse the
6 next of kin of children whose bodies are buried and
7 exhumed at the Dozier School or to pay directly to a
8 provider for the costs associated with funeral
9 services, reinterment, and grave marker expenses;
10 providing a process for reimbursement by the
11 department; providing that a charitable donation made
12 toward funeral, reinterment, and grave marker expenses
13 is not eligible for reimbursement; establishing a task
14 force to make recommendations regarding a memorial and
15 a location of a site for the reinterment of
16 unidentified or unclaimed remains; providing that
17 members of the task force shall serve without
18 compensation but are entitled certain per diem and
19 travel expenses; requiring the task for to submit its
20 recommendation to the department by a certain date, at
21 which time the task force is abolished; authorizing
22 the department to adopt rules; providing
23 appropriations; providing an effective date.

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25 WHEREAS, the Arthur G. Dozier School for Boys, or the
26 Dozier School, operated from 1900 until it was closed in 2011

27 | after allegations of abuse were confirmed in separate
28 | investigations by the Department of Law Enforcement in 2010 and
29 | the Civil Rights Division of the United States Department of
30 | Justice in 2011, and

31 | WHEREAS, official records indicated that 31 graves had been
32 | dug at the facility between 1914 and 1952, and

33 | WHEREAS, a forensic investigation by the University of
34 | South Florida found that there are no records of where children
35 | who died at the Dozier School are buried and that a second
36 | cemetery is likely to exist, and

37 | WHEREAS, exhumations of bodies began in August 2013, and
38 | the excavations yielded 55 burial sites, 24 more than reported
39 | in official records, and

40 | WHEREAS, one of the bodies exhumed during the forensic
41 | investigation was of a child reported missing since 1940, and

42 | WHEREAS, representatives of children formerly held at the
43 | Dozier School have estimated that there could be 100 more bodies
44 | buried on the grounds of the school, and

45 | WHEREAS, many families of children whose bodies have been
46 | exhumed lack the resources to properly reinter those children at
47 | a suitable location, and

48 | WHEREAS, the State of Florida recognizes an obligation to
49 | help the families of children formerly buried at the Dozier
50 | School reinter the bodies of those children, NOW, THEREFORE,

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52 | Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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54 Section 1. (1) Any historical resource, record, archive,
55 or artifact and any human remains that are recovered from the
56 Arthur G. Dozier School for Boys must be transferred to the
57 Department of State. The department shall retain and preserve
58 such historical resources, records, archives, and artifacts.

59 (2) The Department of State shall reimburse the next of
60 kin or pay directly to the provider up to \$7,500 for funeral,
61 reinterment, and grave marker expenses for each child whose body
62 was buried and exhumed at the Dozier School. The department
63 shall identify and locate eligible next of kin of such children
64 by December 31, 2017.

65 (a) To receive reimbursement, the next of kin must submit
66 to the department receipts for or documentation of expenses.
67 Reimbursement shall be made pursuant to s. 215.422, Florida
68 Statutes.

69 (b) If expenses are to be paid directly to the provider,
70 the funeral home or other similar entity shall submit an invoice
71 to the department for the cost of the child's funeral,
72 reinterment, and grave marker expenses. Payment shall be made
73 pursuant to s. 215.422, Florida Statutes.

74 (c) A charitable donation made toward funeral,
75 reinterment, or grave marker expenses is not eligible for
76 reimbursement.

77 (3) By February 1, 2018, the Department of State shall
78 report to the Legislature on the status of payments and

79 reimbursements required by this act.

80 (4) (a) A task force, as defined in s. 20.03, Florida
81 Statutes, is established adjunct to the Department of State to
82 make recommendations to the department regarding the creation
83 and maintenance of a memorial and the location of a site for
84 reinterment of unidentified or unclaimed remains.

85 (b) Task force members shall be appointed by the secretary
86 of the Department of State and shall serve without compensation,
87 but are entitled to reimbursement for per diem and travel
88 expenses in accordance with s. 112.061, Florida Statutes.

89 (c) The recommendations of the task force must be
90 submitted to the Department of State by October 1, 2016, at
91 which time the task force is abolished.

92 (5) The department may adopt rules necessary to administer
93 this section.

94 Section 2. For the 2016-2017 fiscal year, the sum of
95 \$500,000 in nonrecurring funds is appropriated from the General
96 Revenue Fund to the Department of State for the purpose of
97 implementing this act. The unexpended balance of such funds
98 shall revert immediately on July 1, 2017, and is appropriated
99 for the 2017-2018 fiscal year for the same purpose.

100 Section 3. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law.