

By the Committee on Governmental Oversight and Accountability;  
and Senator Joyner

585-02624A-16

2016708c1

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.

24  
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

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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 sites than  
39 reported 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,

51  
52 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

53  
54 Section 1. (1) Any historical resource, record, archive, or  
55 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 kin  
60 or pay directly to the provider up to \$7,500 for funeral,

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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.

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

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

75 (3) By February 1, 2018, the Department of State shall  
76 report to the Legislature on the status of payments and  
77 reimbursements required by this act.

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

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

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

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90       (5) The department may adopt rules necessary to administer  
91 this section.

92       Section 2. For the 2016-2017 fiscal year, the sum of  
93 \$500,000 in nonrecurring funds is appropriated from the General  
94 Revenue Fund to the Department of State for the purpose of  
95 implementing this act. The unexpended balance of such funds  
96 shall revert immediately on July 1, 2017, and is appropriated  
97 for the 2017-2018 fiscal year for the same purpose.

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