



522090

576-03020-18

Proposed Committee Substitute by the Committee on Appropriations  
(Appropriations Subcommittee on Higher Education)

A bill to be entitled

An act relating to missing persons with special needs;  
amending s. 937.041, F.S.; expanding pilot projects  
for missing persons with special needs to the regional  
autism centers; requiring each center that opts to  
join the pilot project to distribute personal devices  
under certain circumstances; revising the requirements  
for personal devices used in the pilot project;  
conforming provisions to changes made by the act;  
deleting a reporting requirement; providing an  
effective date.

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

Section 1. Section 937.041, Florida Statutes, is amended to  
read:

937.041 Missing persons with special needs pilot project  
~~projects.~~-

(1)~~(a)~~ There is created a statewide pilot project ~~in~~  
~~Alachua, Baker, Columbia, Hamilton, and Suwannee Counties,~~ to be  
known as "Project Leo," through regional autism centers  
established under s. 1004.55. Each center that opts to join the  
pilot project shall distribute ~~to provide~~ personal devices to  
aid search-and-rescue efforts for persons with special needs in  
the case of elopement.

~~(b) There is created an additional pilot project in Palm  
Beach County to provide personal devices to aid search-and-~~



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28 ~~rescue efforts for persons with special needs in the case of~~  
29 ~~elopement.~~

30 ~~(c) There is created an additional pilot project in~~  
31 ~~Hillsborough County to provide personal devices to aid search-~~  
32 ~~and-rescue efforts for persons with special needs in the case of~~  
33 ~~elopement.~~

34 ~~(2) (a) 1. Participants for the pilot project specified in~~  
35 ~~paragraph (1) (a) shall be selected based on criteria developed~~  
36 ~~by each participating center based on the specific needs of that~~  
37 ~~center's service area counties prescribed under s. 1004.55 the~~  
38 ~~Center for Autism and Related Disabilities at the University of~~  
39 ~~Florida.~~

40 ~~2. Participants for the pilot project specified in~~  
41 ~~paragraph (1) (b) shall be selected based on criteria developed~~  
42 ~~by the Center for Autism and Related Disabilities at Florida~~  
43 ~~Atlantic University.~~

44 ~~3. Participants for the pilot project specified in~~  
45 ~~paragraph (1) (c) shall be selected based on criteria developed~~  
46 ~~by the Center for Autism and Related Disabilities at the~~  
47 ~~University of South Florida.~~

48 ~~(b) Criteria for participation in the pilot project~~  
49 ~~projects must include, at a minimum, the person's risk of~~  
50 ~~elopement. The qualifying participants shall be selected on a~~  
51 ~~first-come, first-served basis by the respective centers to the~~  
52 ~~extent of available funding within their existing resources. The~~  
53 ~~Each project must be voluntary and free of charge to~~  
54 ~~participants.~~

55 ~~(3) Under the each pilot project, personal devices to aid~~  
56 ~~search-and-rescue efforts which are attachable to clothing or~~



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57 ~~otherwise worn~~ shall be provided by the respective center to the  
58 sheriff's offices of the participating counties. The devices  
59 shall be distributed to project participants by the county  
60 sheriff's offices in conjunction with the respective center. The  
61 respective center shall fund any costs associated with  
62 monitoring the devices.

63 ~~(4) Each center shall submit a preliminary report by~~  
64 ~~December 1, 2016, and a final report by December 15, 2017, to~~  
65 ~~the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of~~  
66 ~~the House of Representatives describing the implementation and~~  
67 ~~operation of its pilot project. At a minimum, each report must~~  
68 ~~include the criteria used to select participants, the number of~~  
69 ~~participants, the nature of the participants' special needs, the~~  
70 ~~number of participants who elope, the amount of time taken to~~  
71 ~~rescue such participants following elopement, and the outcome of~~  
72 ~~any rescue attempts. Each final report shall also provide~~  
73 ~~recommendations for modification or continued implementation of~~  
74 ~~the project.~~

75 ~~(4)(5) The~~ Each project shall operate to the extent of  
76 available funding within the respective center's existing  
77 resources.

78 ~~(5)(6) This section expires June 30,~~ 2019 ~~2018.~~

79 Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2018.