

1                   A bill to be entitled  
2           An act relating to the Task Force on the Monitoring of  
3           Children in Out-of-Home Care; creating s. 39.4092,  
4           F.S.; creating the Task Force on the Monitoring of  
5           Children in Out-of-Home Care for specified purposes;  
6           requiring the Department of Law Enforcement to provide  
7           certain services; providing for membership by a  
8           specified date; requiring the task force to convene by  
9           a specified date; requiring the task force to conduct  
10          meetings through teleconference or other electronic  
11          means; providing duties of the task force; requiring  
12          the Department of Children and Families to submit  
13          certain monthly reports to the task force through a  
14          specified date; requiring the Florida Institute for  
15          Child Welfare to conduct focus groups and submit its  
16          findings to the task force by a specified date;  
17          requiring the task force to submit a report to the  
18          Governor and Legislature by a specified date;  
19          providing for repeal of the task force unless reviewed  
20          and saved by the Legislature; providing an effective  
21          date.

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

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25          Section 1.   Section 39.4092, Florida Statutes, is created

26 to read:

27 39.4092 Task Force on the Monitoring of Children in Out-  
28 of-Home Care.-

29 (1) CREATION.-The Task Force on the Monitoring of Children  
30 in Out-of-Home Care, a task force as defined in s. 20.03(8), is  
31 established within the Department of Law Enforcement. The  
32 Department of Law Enforcement shall provide administrative and  
33 staff support services relating to the functions of the task  
34 force.

35 (2) PURPOSE.-The purpose of the task force is to identify  
36 and counter the root causes of why children go missing while in  
37 out-of-home care and to ensure that prompt and effective action  
38 is taken to address such causes. The task force shall examine  
39 and recommend improvements to current policies, procedures,  
40 programs, and initiatives to prevent children from going missing  
41 while in out-of-home care and to ensure that timely and  
42 comprehensive steps are taken to find missing children who are  
43 missing for any reason, including, but not limited to, running  
44 away, human trafficking, and abduction by or absconding with a  
45 parent or an individual who does not have care or custody of the  
46 child.

47 (3) MEMBERSHIP; MEETINGS.-

48 (a) The task force shall be composed of the following 13  
49 members:

50 1. A member of the Senate, appointed by the President of

- 51 the Senate.
- 52 2. A member of the House of Representatives, appointed by  
 53 the Speaker of the House of Representatives.
- 54 3. The secretary, or his or her designee.
- 55 4. The Secretary of the Department of Juvenile Justice, or  
 56 his or her designee.
- 57 5. The executive director of the Statewide Guardian Ad  
 58 Litem Office, or his or her designee.
- 59 6. The executive director of the Department of Law  
 60 Enforcement, or his or her designee.
- 61 7. A representative from Safe Kids Florida, appointed by  
 62 the State Surgeon General.
- 63 8. A representative from the Statewide Council on Human  
 64 Trafficking, appointed by the Attorney General.
- 65 9. A representative from a community-based care lead  
 66 agency that delivers child welfare services in a rural county,  
 67 appointed by the secretary.
- 68 10. A representative from a community-based care lead  
 69 agency that delivers child welfare services in an urban county,  
 70 appointed by the secretary.
- 71 11. A licensed foster parent, appointed by the secretary.
- 72 12. A representative from a residential group care  
 73 provider, appointed by the secretary.
- 74 13. A young adult who aged out of the foster care system,  
 75 appointed by the secretary.

76        (b) Appointments to the task force must be made by August  
77 1, 2021. Each member shall serve at the pleasure of the official  
78 who appointed the member. A vacancy on the task force shall be  
79 filled in the same manner as the original appointment.

80        (c) The task force shall elect a chair from among its  
81 members.

82        (d) The task force shall convene no later than September  
83 1, 2021. The task force shall meet monthly or upon the call of  
84 the chair. The task force shall hold its meetings through  
85 teleconference or other electronic means.

86        (4) DUTIES.—The duties of the task force include all of  
87 the following:

88        (a) Analyzing statistical data regarding children in out-  
89 of-home care who are missing and the reasons why the children  
90 are missing, if known.

91        (b) Identifying the root causes of why children go missing  
92 while in out-of-home care and how to prevent children from going  
93 missing while in out-of-home care.

94        (c) Assessing the relationship between children who go  
95 missing from out-of-home care and the risks of such children  
96 becoming victims of human trafficking.

97        (d) Assessing the comprehensiveness and effectiveness of  
98 existing policies and procedures for preventing children in out-  
99 of-home care from going missing, for promptly determining  
100 whether such children are missing, and for locating such

101 children.

102 (e) Evaluating the state's approaches to reporting on the  
103 individual status of children missing from out-of-home care and  
104 the results of the efforts to locate such children, including,  
105 but not limited to, the use of technology, training,  
106 communication, and cooperation.

107 (f) Measuring the overall performance of efforts to locate  
108 and recover children who are missing from out-of-home care,  
109 including, but not limited to, the communication and response  
110 between community-based care-lead agencies, the department, and  
111 other entities.

112 (g) Collaborating with the Florida Institute for Child  
113 Welfare to identify best practices used in other states for  
114 monitoring the location of children in out-of-home care who go  
115 missing, and evaluating whether such practices should be adopted  
116 in the state.

117 (h) Submitting recommendations to improve policies,  
118 procedures, and systems in the state, including, but not limited  
119 to, technology, training, communication, and cooperation, so all  
120 entities are effectively monitoring children in out-of-home  
121 care, responding appropriately when such children go missing,  
122 and preventing such children from going missing while in out-of-  
123 home care.

124 (5) FOCUS GROUPS.—The Florida Institute for Child Welfare  
125 shall conduct focus groups with children in out-of-home care and

126 young adults who aged out of the foster care system to assist  
127 the task force in fulfilling its duties. The focus groups must,  
128 at a minimum, consider the reasons why such children seek to  
129 leave their out-of-home placement, identify opportunities and  
130 resources to assist and prevent children from leaving their  
131 placements, and to facilitate the return of such missing  
132 children. The institute shall submit the findings from the focus  
133 groups to the task force by April 1, 2022.

134 (6) REPORTS.—

135 (a) Through October 1, 2022, the department shall provide  
136 monthly reports to the task force to assist the task force in  
137 fulfilling its duties. The monthly reports must, at a minimum,  
138 address the number and percentage of children in out-of-home  
139 care who have been reported missing, the reasons why such  
140 children are missing if known, and the length of time between  
141 when such children are reported missing and their recovery or  
142 return. The monthly report must categorize the required data by  
143 age, county, community-based care lead agency, and reason, if  
144 known.

145 (b) By October 1, 2022, the task force shall submit to the  
146 Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the  
147 House of Representatives a report that compiles the findings and  
148 recommendations of the task force.

149 (7) REPEAL.—This section is repealed June 30, 2023, unless  
150 reviewed and saved from repeal by the Legislature.

151 | Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2021. |