

By Senator Rouson

19-01584-22

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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. 39.4093,  
4           F.S.; creating the task force adjunct to the  
5           Department of Law Enforcement; requiring the  
6           department to provide certain services; specifying the  
7           purpose of the task force; specifying the composition  
8           of the task force; providing requirements for member  
9           appointments, election of a chair, and meetings;  
10          specifying duties of the task force; requiring the  
11          Florida Institute for Child Welfare to conduct certain  
12          focus groups and submit its findings to the task force  
13          by a specified date; requiring the Department of  
14          Children and Families to submit certain monthly  
15          reports to the task force through a specified date;  
16          requiring the task force to submit a report to the  
17          Governor and Legislature by a specified date;  
18          providing for future repeal; providing an effective  
19          date.

20  
21 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

22  
23           Section 1. Section 39.4093, Florida Statutes, is created to  
24           read:

25           39.4093 Task Force on the Monitoring of Children in Out-of-  
26           Home Care.—

27           (1) CREATION.—The Task Force on the Monitoring of Children  
28           in Out-of-Home Care, a task force as defined in s. 20.03(8), is  
29           created adjunct to the Department of Law Enforcement. The

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30 Department of Law Enforcement shall provide administrative and  
31 staff support services relating to the functions of the task  
32 force.

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

44 (3) MEMBERSHIP; MEETINGS.—

45 (a) The task force is composed of the following members:

46 1. A member of the Senate, appointed by the President of  
47 the Senate.

48 2. A member of the House of Representatives, appointed by  
49 the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

50 3. The secretary, or his or her designee.

51 4. The Secretary of Juvenile Justice, or his or her  
52 designee.

53 5. The executive director of the Statewide Guardian Ad  
54 Lite Office, or his or her designee.

55 6. The executive director of the Department of Law  
56 Enforcement, or his or her designee.

57 7. A representative from Safe Kids Florida, appointed by  
58 the State Surgeon General.

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59       8. A representative from the Statewide Council on Human  
60 Trafficking, appointed by the Attorney General.

61       9. A representative from a community-based care lead agency  
62 that delivers child welfare services in a rural county,  
63 appointed by the secretary.

64       10. A representative from a community-based care lead  
65 agency that delivers child welfare services in an urban county,  
66 appointed by the secretary.

67       11. A licensed foster parent, appointed by the secretary.

68       12. A representative from a residential group care  
69 provider, appointed by the secretary.

70       13. A young adult who aged out of the foster care system,  
71 appointed by the secretary.

72       (b) Appointments to the task force must be made by August  
73 1, 2022. Each member shall serve at the pleasure of the official  
74 who appointed the member. A vacancy on the task force must be  
75 filled in the same manner as the original appointment.

76       (c) The task force shall elect a chair from among its  
77 members.

78       (d) The task force shall convene no later than September 1,  
79 2022. The task force shall meet monthly or upon the call of the  
80 chair. The task force shall hold its meetings through  
81 teleconference or other electronic means.

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

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

87       (b) Identifying the root causes of why children go missing

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88 while in out-of-home care and how to prevent children from going  
89 missing while in out-of-home care.

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

93 (d) Assessing the comprehensiveness and effectiveness of  
94 existing policies and procedures for preventing children in out-  
95 of-home care from going missing, for promptly determining  
96 whether such children are missing, and for locating such  
97 children.

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

103 (f) Measuring the overall performance of efforts to locate  
104 and recover children missing from out-of-home care, including,  
105 but not limited to, the communication and response between  
106 community-based care lead agencies, the department, and other  
107 entities.

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

113 (h) Submitting recommendations to improve policies,  
114 procedures, and systems in this state, including, but not  
115 limited to, technology, training, communication, and  
116 cooperation, so that all entities are effectively monitoring

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117 children in out-of-home care, responding appropriately when such  
118 children go missing, and preventing such children from going  
119 missing while in out-of-home care.

120 (5) FOCUS GROUPS.—The Florida Institute for Child Welfare  
121 shall conduct focus groups with children in out-of-home care and  
122 young adults who aged out of the foster care system to assist  
123 the task force in fulfilling its duties. The focus groups shall,  
124 at a minimum, consider the reasons why such children seek to  
125 leave their out-of-home placement, and identify opportunities  
126 and resources to assist and prevent children from leaving their  
127 placements and to facilitate the return of such missing  
128 children. The institute shall submit the findings from the focus  
129 groups to the task force by April 1, 2023.

130 (6) REPORTS.—

131 (a) Through October 1, 2023, the department shall provide  
132 monthly reports to the task force to assist the task force in  
133 fulfilling its duties. The monthly reports must, at a minimum,  
134 address the number and percentage of children in out-of-home  
135 care who have been reported missing; the reasons why such  
136 children are missing, if known; and the length of time between  
137 when such children are reported missing and their recovery or  
138 return. The monthly report must categorize the required data by  
139 age, county, community-based care lead agency, and reasons why  
140 such children are missing, if known.

141 (b) By October 1, 2023, the task force shall submit to the  
142 Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the  
143 House of Representatives a report that compiles the findings and  
144 recommendations of the task force.

145 (7) REPEAL.—This section is repealed June 30, 2024, unless

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146 reviewed and saved from repeal by the Legislature.

147 Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2022.