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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 individual interviews and submit its
13 findings to the task force by a specified date;
14 requiring the Department of Children and Families to
15 submit certain monthly reports to the task force
16 through a specified date; requiring the task force to
17 submit a report to the Governor and Legislature by a
18 specified date; providing for future review and
19 repeal; providing an appropriation; providing an
20 effective date.

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

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

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

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

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

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

45 (3) MEMBERSHIP; MEETINGS.—

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

58 7. A representative from Safe Kids Florida, appointed by

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59 the State Surgeon General.

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

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

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

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

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

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

73 (b) Appointments to the task force must be made by August
74 1, 2023. Each member serves at the pleasure of the official who
75 appointed the member. A vacancy on the task force must be filled
76 in the same manner as the original appointment.

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

79 (d) The task force shall convene no later than September 1,
80 2023. The task force shall meet monthly or upon the call of the
81 chair. The task force shall hold its meetings through
82 teleconference or other electronic means.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

114 (h) Submitting recommendations to improve policies,
115 procedures, and systems in this state, including, but not
116 limited to, technology, training, communication, and

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117 cooperation, so that all entities are effectively monitoring
118 children in out-of-home care, responding appropriately when such
119 children go missing, and preventing such children from going
120 missing while in out-of-home care.

121 (5) YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULT PARTICIPATION.—The Florida
122 Institute for Child Welfare shall conduct focus groups or
123 individual interviews with children in out-of-home care and
124 young adults who have aged out of the foster care system to
125 assist the task force in fulfilling its duties. The focus groups
126 or individual interviews shall, at a minimum, consider the
127 reasons why such children seek to leave their out-of-home
128 placements and identify opportunities and resources to assist
129 and prevent children from leaving their placements and to
130 facilitate the return of such missing children. The institute
131 shall submit the findings from the focus groups and individual
132 interviews to the task force by April 1, 2024.

133 (6) REPORTS.—

134 (a) Through October 1, 2024, the department shall provide
135 monthly reports to the task force to assist the task force in
136 fulfilling its duties. The monthly reports must, at a minimum,
137 address the number and percentage of children in out-of-home
138 care who have been reported missing; the reasons why such
139 children are missing, if known; and the length of time between
140 when such children are reported missing and their recovery or
141 return. The monthly report must categorize the required data by
142 age, county, community-based care lead agency, and reasons why
143 such children are missing, if known.

144 (b) By October 1, 2024, the task force shall submit to the
145 Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the

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146 House of Representatives a report that compiles the findings and
147 recommendations of the task force.

148 (7) REPEAL.—This section is repealed June 30, 2025, unless
149 reviewed and saved from repeal through reenactment by the
150 Legislature.

151 Section 2. For the 2023-2024 fiscal year, the sum of
152 \$140,076 in nonrecurring funds is appropriated from the
153 Operating Trust Fund to the Florida Department of Law
154 Enforcement for the purpose of providing administrative and
155 support services relating to the Task Force on the Monitoring of
156 Children in Out-of-Home Care.

157 Section 3. This act shall take effect July 1, 2023.