



740346

LEGISLATIVE ACTION

Senate

.
. .
. .
. .
. .

House

Senator Avila moved the following:

Senate Amendment (with title amendment)

Delete everything after the enacting clause
and insert:

Section 1. Section 937.0401, Florida Statutes, is created
to read:

937.0401 Spectrum Alert.—

(1) The Legislature finds that autism spectrum disorder
(ASD) significantly affects children in this country, creating
unique challenges that can lead to critical safety risks, such
as elopement or wandering behaviors in children. Children with



740346

12 ASD are prone to wander from safe environments at a higher rate
13 than their non-autistic peers. Elopement frequently results in
14 severe consequences, including fatal traffic accidents and
15 drownings. Notably, drowning is the leading cause of death of
16 children with ASD in this country, with Florida ranking fifth in
17 the nation. The high propensity for elopement and the
18 ineffectiveness of traditional search and response methods
19 necessitate a robust system that will swiftly locate and ensure
20 the safety of missing children with ASD. The Legislature finds
21 that a standardized system is necessary to aid in the search for
22 a missing child with ASD.

23 (2) By July 1, 2026, the Department of Law Enforcement, in
24 cooperation with the Department of Transportation, the
25 Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles, the Department
26 of the Lottery, and local law enforcement agencies, shall
27 establish and implement the Spectrum Alert to enhance the safety
28 and well-being of children with ASD through immediate and
29 effective community and emergency response.

30 (3) By July 1, 2026, the Department of Law Enforcement, in
31 cooperation with the Department of Transportation, the
32 Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles, the Department
33 of the Lottery, and local law enforcement agencies, shall:

34 (a) Develop a training program and alert system for missing
35 children with ASD which is compatible with existing alert
36 systems. The training program must implement crisis intervention
37 team training to equip law enforcement officers with the skills
38 to understand ASD and other mental illnesses, to de-escalate
39 interactions with children in crisis, to facilitate appropriate
40 interventions, and to respond effectively to a reported missing



740346

41 child emergency when the child has ASD.

42 (b) Establish policies and procedures for responding to a
43 reported missing child emergency when the child has ASD. The
44 policies and procedures must, at a minimum, provide for all of
45 the following:

46 1. Immediate and widespread dissemination of critical
47 information when a child with ASD is reported missing.

48 2. Enhancement of emergency response teams' competence by
49 informing them of the unique behaviors and needs of children
50 with ASD.

51 3. Measures to increase public awareness and understanding
52 of the risks associated with autism-related elopement, to foster
53 community support for children with ASD.

54 (c) Require a law enforcement agency, at a minimum, to do
55 all of the following upon receiving such a report:

56 1. Contact media outlets in the affected area or
57 surrounding jurisdictions.

58 2. Inform all on-duty law enforcement officers of the
59 reported missing child with ASD.

60 3. Communicate the report to all other law enforcement
61 agencies in the counties surrounding the county in which the
62 report was filed.

63 (4) The Department of Law Enforcement may adopt rules to
64 implement and administer this section.

65 Section 2. For the 2025-2026 fiscal year, the sum of
66 \$190,000 in nonrecurring funds is appropriated from the
67 Operating Trust Fund within the Department of Law Enforcement to
68 the Department of Law Enforcement for the purpose of
69 implementing the Spectrum Alert.



740346

70 Section 3. This act shall take effect July 1, 2025.

71

72 ===== T I T L E A M E N D M E N T =====

73 And the title is amended as follows:

74 Delete everything before the enacting clause

75 and insert:

76 A bill to be entitled

77 An act relating to the Spectrum Alert; creating s.

78 937.0401, F.S.; providing legislative findings;

79 requiring the Department of Law Enforcement, in

80 cooperation with the Department of Transportation, the

81 Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles, the

82 Department of the Lottery, and local law enforcement

83 agencies, to establish and implement the Spectrum

84 Alert by a specified date; requiring the department,

85 in cooperation with specified entities, to develop a

86 training program and alert system for missing children

87 with autism spectrum disorder which is compatible with

88 existing alert systems by a certain date; specifying

89 requirements for the training program; requiring the

90 Department of Law Enforcement to establish specified

91 policies and procedures; authorizing the department to

92 adopt rules; providing an appropriation; providing an

93 effective date.