

By Senator Berman

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A bill to be entitled

An act relating to victims of domestic violence and dating violence; creating s. 741.317, F.S.; providing a short title; creating the HAVEN Coordinating Council within the Department of Law Enforcement; requiring the department to provide certain services; defining terms; specifying the composition of the coordinating council; providing requirements for member appointments, election of a chair, and meetings; requiring that member appointments be completed and the first meeting of the coordinating council be held by dates certain; specifying duties of the coordinating council; authorizing counties to create county-level HAVEN councils; authorizing county-level HAVEN councils to take certain actions; requiring the coordinating council to provide certain quarterly reports; requiring the coordinating council to annually submit a certain report to specified entities and persons, the Governor, and the Legislature by a specified date; requiring county-level HAVEN councils to annually submit a certain report to the Department of Law Enforcement and the coordinating council by a specified date; providing for funding of the coordinating council; specifying that the act supersedes certain local regulations; providing for legislative review and repeal of the coordinating council; amending s. 741.401, F.S.; revising legislative findings to include victims of dating violence; reordering and amending s. 741.402, F.S.;

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defining the term "dating violence"; amending s. 741.403, F.S.; providing that victims of dating violence may apply to participate in the Attorney General's address confidentiality program; amending s. 741.408, F.S.; requiring the Attorney General to designate certain entities to assist victims of dating violence applying to be address confidentiality program participants; amending ss. 741.465, 741.4651, and 960.001, F.S.; conforming provisions to changes made by the act; providing an effective date.

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

Section 1. Section 741.317, Florida Statutes, is created to read:

741.317 Helping Abuse Victims Escape Now Act; coordinating council; membership; duties; reports; funding; preemption.—

(1) SHORT TITLE.—This section may be cited as the "Helping Abuse Victims Escape Now (HAVEN) Act."

(2) CREATION.—The HAVEN Coordinating Council, a coordinating council as defined in s. 20.03, is created within the Department of Law Enforcement. The Department of Law Enforcement shall provide administrative and staff support services relating to the functions of the coordinating council.

(3) DEFINITIONS.—As used in this section, the term:

(a) "Dating violence" has the same meaning as in s. 784.046(1)(d).

(b) "Domestic violence" has the same meaning as in s. 741.28.

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59 (c) "Dynamic website" means a website that generates
60 webpages in real time and can change its content and layout
61 depending on various parameters, such as user preferences, time
62 of day, and location.

63 (4) MEMBERSHIP; MEETINGS.—

64 (a) The HAVEN Coordinating Council is composed of the
65 following members:

66 1. A representative from the Department of Law Enforcement,
67 appointed by the executive director of the Department of Law
68 Enforcement.

69 2. A representative from a local law enforcement agency,
70 appointed by the sheriff of the county in which the law
71 enforcement agency is located.

72 3. A representative from a victim services program,
73 appointed by the secretary of the Department of Children and
74 Families.

75 4. A representative from a domestic violence advocacy
76 group, appointed by the secretary of the Department of Children
77 and Families.

78 5. An expert in technology matters, appointed jointly by
79 the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of
80 Representatives.

81 6. An attorney in good standing with The Florida Bar and
82 who is a member of the Family Law Section of The Florida Bar,
83 appointed by the president of The Florida Bar.

84 7. Any other representative as determined by the HAVEN
85 Coordinating Council, appointed by the chair of the council.

86 (b) Appointments to the coordinating council must be made
87 by September 1, 2026. Each member serves at the pleasure of the

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88 official who appointed the member. A vacancy on the coordinating
89 council must be filled in the same manner as the original
90 appointment.

91 (c) The coordinating council shall elect a chair from among
92 its members.

93 (d) The first meeting of the coordinating council must be
94 held no later than October 1, 2026. The coordinating council may
95 hold its meetings through teleconference or other electronic
96 means.

97 (5) DUTIES.—The HAVEN Coordinating Council shall:

98 (a) Develop a dynamic website that has the ability to do
99 all of the following:

100 1. Synchronize with law enforcement databases to ensure
101 real-time data sharing and updates.

102 2. Allow a user to generate a unique telephone number from
103 which the user can call a 911 emergency telephone number when he
104 or she is in need of assistance from law enforcement.

105 3. Allow a user to choose a personalized numerical code or
106 phrase that discreetly alerts a law enforcement agency or
107 sheriff's office when the user calls his or her uniquely
108 generated telephone number.

109 4. Automatically transmit specified data to a law
110 enforcement agency or sheriff's office when a user calls his or
111 her generated telephone number and uses his or her personalized
112 numerical code or phrase, which then triggers the immediate
113 dispatch of a law enforcement officer or sheriff's deputy to the
114 user's location.

115 (b) Establish a public awareness campaign to inform the
116 public about the dynamic website and its features.

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117 (c) Coordinate with local law enforcement agencies and
118 sheriff's offices to develop and implement a training program to
119 ensure law enforcement officers are equipped to respond swiftly
120 and effectively to alerts that are generated through the dynamic
121 website.

122 (d) Meet at least quarterly to review relevant data,
123 identify trends, and determine alternative or additional avenues
124 of support for victims of domestic violence or dating violence.

125 (6) COUNTY-LEVEL HAVEN COUNCILS.—

126 (a) Each county may establish a county-level HAVEN council.
127 County-level councils shall operate in coordination with the
128 HAVEN Coordinating Council and may collaborate with local
129 domestic violence fatality review teams established pursuant to
130 s. 741.316.

131 (b) A county-level HAVEN council may do all of the
132 following:

133 1. Review cases involving domestic violence and dating
134 violence, including fatalities and near-fatalities, in
135 coordination with local domestic violence fatality review teams.

136 2. Contribute to the development and maintenance of the
137 dynamic website by providing localized data, resources, and
138 impact metrics.

139 (7) REPORTS.—

140 (a) The HAVEN Coordinating Council shall do all of the
141 following:

142 1. Provide quarterly reports to local law enforcement
143 agencies and sheriff's offices.

144 2. Beginning in 2027, annually by November 1 submit to the
145 Governor, the Attorney General, the executive director of the

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Department of Law Enforcement, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives a report that compiles the progress and cost breakdowns relating to the establishment of the dynamic website and, once the dynamic website is functioning, statistics relating to the usage and effectiveness of the website and the effectiveness of the coordinating council.

(b) Beginning in 2027, a county-level HAVEN council shall annually by November 1 submit to the Department of Law Enforcement and the HAVEN Coordinating Council a report summarizing the activities, findings, and recommendations of the county-level council.

(8) FUNDING.—

(a) The Legislature may appropriate funds annually to the Department of Law Enforcement to be used to implement this act.

(b) The HAVEN Coordinating Council may apply for and receive grants and accept donations to support the development and maintenance of the dynamic website.

(9) PREEMPTION.—This section supersedes any local government regulations on matters covered under this section. A local government or political subdivision may not administer, implement, or enforce any law, rule, regulation, standard, or provision that conflicts with this section.

(10) REPEAL.—In accordance with s. 20.052(8), this section is repealed October 2, 2029, unless reviewed and saved from repeal through reenactment by the Legislature.

Section 2. Section 741.401, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

741.401 Legislative findings; purpose.—The Legislature

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finds that persons attempting to escape from actual or threatened domestic violence or dating violence frequently establish new addresses in order to prevent their assailants or probable assailants from finding them. The purpose of ss. 741.401-741.409 is to enable state and local agencies to respond to requests for public records without disclosing the location of a victim of domestic violence or dating violence, to enable interagency cooperation with the Attorney General in providing address confidentiality for victims of domestic violence or dating violence, and to enable state and local agencies to accept a program participant's use of an address designated by the Attorney General as a substitute mailing address.

Section 3. Section 741.402, Florida Statutes, is reordered and amended to read:

741.402 Definitions; ss. 741.401-741.409.—Unless the context clearly requires otherwise, as used in ss. 741.401-741.409, the term:

(1) "Address" means a residential street address, school address, or work address of an individual, as specified on the individual's application to be a program participant under ss. 741.401-741.409.

~~(4)(2)~~ "Program participant" means a person certified as a program participant under s. 741.403.

(2) "Dating violence" means an act of violence as defined in s. 784.046(1)(a), including a threat of such an act, committed against an individual in a continuing and significant relationship as determined by the factors listed in s. 784.046(1)(d), regardless of whether the act or threat has been reported to law enforcement.

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(3) "Domestic violence" means an act as defined in s. 741.28 and includes a threat of such acts committed against an individual in a domestic situation, regardless of whether these acts or threats have been reported to law enforcement officers.

Section 4. Paragraphs (a) and (d) of subsection (1) of section 741.403, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

741.403 Address confidentiality program; application; certification.—

(1) An adult person, a parent or guardian acting on behalf of a minor, or a guardian acting on behalf of a person adjudicated incapacitated under chapter 744 may apply to the Attorney General to have an address designated by the Attorney General serve as the person's address or the address of the minor or incapacitated person. To the extent possible within funds appropriated for this purpose, the Attorney General shall approve an application if it is filed in the manner and on the form prescribed by the Attorney General and if it contains all of the following:

(a) A sworn statement by the applicant that the applicant has good reason to believe that the applicant, or the minor or incapacitated person on whose behalf the application is made, is a victim of domestic violence or dating violence, and that the applicant fears for his or her safety or his or her children's safety or the safety of the minor or incapacitated person on whose behalf the application is made.

(d) A statement that the new address or addresses that the applicant requests must not be disclosed for the reason that disclosure will increase the risk of domestic violence or dating violence.

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233 Section 5. Section 741.408, Florida Statutes, is amended to
234 read:

235 741.408 Assistance for program applicants.—The Attorney
236 General shall designate state and local agencies and nonprofit
237 agencies that provide counseling and shelter services to victims
238 of domestic violence or dating violence to assist persons
239 applying to be program participants. Assistance and counseling
240 rendered by the Office of the Attorney General or its designees
241 to applicants does not constitute legal advice.

242 Section 6. Section 741.465, Florida Statutes, is amended to
243 read:

244 741.465 Public records exemption for the Address
245 Confidentiality Program for Victims of ~~Domestic~~ Violence.—

246 (1) For purposes of this section, the term "address" means
247 a residential street address, school address, or work address,
248 as specified on the individual's application to be a program
249 participant in the Address Confidentiality Program for Victims
250 of Violence.

251 (2) The addresses, corresponding telephone numbers, and
252 social security numbers of program participants in the Address
253 Confidentiality Program for Victims of ~~Domestic~~ Violence held by
254 the Office of the Attorney General are exempt from s. 119.07(1)
255 and s. 24(a), Art. I of the State Constitution, except the
256 information may be disclosed under the following circumstances:
257 to a law enforcement agency for purposes of assisting in the
258 execution of a valid arrest warrant; if directed by a court
259 order, to a person identified in the order; or if the
260 certification has been canceled. ~~For purposes of this section,~~
261 ~~the term "address" means a residential street address, school~~

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~~address, or work address, as specified on the individual's
application to be a program participant in the Address
Confidentiality Program for Victims of Domestic Violence.~~

(3)~~(2)~~ The names, addresses, and telephone numbers of participants in the Address Confidentiality Program for Victims of ~~Domestic~~ Violence contained in voter registration and voting records held by the supervisor of elections and the Department of State are exempt from s. 119.07(1) and s. 24(a), Art. I of the State Constitution, except the information may be disclosed under the following circumstances: to a law enforcement agency for purposes of assisting in the execution of an arrest warrant or, if directed by a court order, to a person identified in the order. This exemption applies to information made exempt by this subsection before, on, or after the effective date of the exemption.

Section 7. Section 741.4651, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

741.4651 Public records exemption; victims of stalking or aggravated stalking.—The names, addresses, and telephone numbers of persons who are victims of stalking or aggravated stalking are exempt from s. 119.07(1) and s. 24(a), Art. I of the State Constitution in the same manner that the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of participants in the Address Confidentiality Program for Victims of ~~Domestic~~ Violence which are held by the Attorney General under s. 741.465 are exempt from disclosure, provided that the victim files a sworn statement of stalking with the Office of the Attorney General and otherwise complies with the procedures in ss. 741.401-741.409.

Section 8. Paragraph (c) of subsection (1) of section

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960.001, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

960.001 Guidelines for fair treatment of victims and witnesses in the criminal justice and juvenile justice systems.—

(1) The Department of Legal Affairs, the state attorneys, the Department of Corrections, the Department of Juvenile Justice, the Florida Commission on Offender Review, the State Courts Administrator and circuit court administrators, the Department of Law Enforcement, and every sheriff's department, police department, or other law enforcement agency as defined in s. 943.10(4) shall develop and implement guidelines for the use of their respective agencies, which guidelines are consistent with the purposes of this act and s. 16(b), Art. I of the State Constitution and are designed to implement s. 16(b), Art. I of the State Constitution and to achieve the following objectives:

(c) *Information concerning protection available to victim or witness.*—A victim or witness shall be furnished, as a matter of course, with information on steps that are available to law enforcement officers and state attorneys to protect victims and witnesses from intimidation. Victims of domestic violence or dating violence shall also be given information about the address confidentiality program provided under s. 741.403.

Section 9. This act shall take effect July 1, 2026.