

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 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; authorizing the task force to
10 conduct meetings through teleconference or other
11 electronic means; providing duties of the task force;
12 requiring the Florida Institute for Child Welfare to
13 conduct focus groups or individual interviews and
14 submit its findings to the task force by a specified
15 date; requiring the Department of Children and
16 Families to submit certain monthly reports to the task
17 force through a specified date; requiring the task
18 force to submit a report to the Governor and
19 Legislature by a specified date; providing for repeal
20 of the task force unless reviewed and saved by the
21 Legislature; providing an effective date.

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

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25 Section 1. Section 39.4093, Florida Statutes, is created

26 to read:

27 39.4093 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 a parent or a person
45 who does not have care or custody of the child.

46 (3) MEMBERSHIP; MEETINGS.-

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

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

51 2. A member of the House of Representatives, appointed by
52 the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

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

54 4. The Secretary of the Department of Juvenile Justice, or
55 his or her designee.

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

58 6. The executive director of the Department of Law
59 Enforcement, or his or her designee.

60 7. A representative from Safe Kids Florida, appointed by
61 the State Surgeon General.

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

64 9. A representative from a community-based care lead
65 agency that delivers child welfare services in a county defined
66 as rural by the most recent United States Census, appointed by
67 the secretary.

68 10. A representative from a community-based care lead
69 agency that delivers child welfare services in a county defined
70 as urban by the most recent United States Census, appointed by
71 the secretary.

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

73 12. A representative from a residential group care
74 provider, appointed by the secretary.

75 13. A young adult who aged out of the foster care system,

76 appointed by the secretary.

77 (b) Appointments to the task force must be made by August
78 1, 2023. Each member shall serve at the pleasure of the official
79 who appointed the member. A vacancy on the task force shall be
80 filled in the same manner as the original appointment.

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

83 (d) The task force shall convene no later than September
84 1, 2023. The task force shall meet monthly or upon the call of
85 the chair. The task force may hold its meetings through
86 teleconference or other electronic means.

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

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

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

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

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

101 whether such children are missing, and for locating such
102 children.

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

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

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

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

125 (5) FOCUS GROUPS AND INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS.—The Florida

126 Institute for Child Welfare shall conduct one or more focus
127 groups or individual interviews with children in out-of-home
128 care or young adults who were formerly in out-of-home care to
129 assist the task force in fulfilling its duties. The focus groups
130 or individual interviews must, at a minimum, address the reasons
131 why such children seek to leave their out-of-home placement,
132 identify opportunities and resources to assist and prevent
133 children from leaving their placements, and to facilitate the
134 return of such missing children. The institute shall submit the
135 findings from the focus groups and individual interviews to the
136 task force by April 1, 2024.

137 (6) REPORTS.—

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

148 (b) By October 1, 2024, the task force shall submit to the
149 Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the
150 House of Representatives a report that compiles the findings and

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151 | recommendations of the task force.

152 | (7) REPEAL.—This section is repealed June 30, 2025, unless
153 | reviewed and saved from repeal by the Legislature.

154 | Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2023.