

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 appropriation; providing an
22 effective date.

23
24 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:
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26 Section 1. Section 39.4093, Florida Statutes, is created
 27 to read:

28 39.4093 Task Force on the Monitoring of Children in Out-
 29 of-Home Care.-

30 (1) CREATION.-The Task Force on the Monitoring of Children
 31 in Out-of-Home Care, a task force as defined in s. 20.03(8), is
 32 established within the Department of Law Enforcement. The
 33 Department of Law Enforcement shall provide administrative and
 34 staff support services relating to the functions of the task
 35 force.

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

47 (3) MEMBERSHIP; MEETINGS.-

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

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

- 51 the Senate.
- 52 2. A member of the House of Representatives, appointed by
 53 the Speaker of the House of Representatives.
- 54 3. The secretary, or his or her designee.
- 55 4. The Secretary of the Department of Juvenile Justice, or
 56 his or her designee.
- 57 5. The executive director of the Statewide Guardian Ad
 58 Litem Office, or his or her designee.
- 59 6. The executive director of the Department of Law
 60 Enforcement, or his or her designee.
- 61 7. A representative from Safe Kids Florida, appointed by
 62 the State Surgeon General.
- 63 8. A representative from the Statewide Council on Human
 64 Trafficking, appointed by the Attorney General.
- 65 9. A representative from a community-based care lead
 66 agency that delivers child welfare services in a county defined
 67 as rural by the most recent United States Census, appointed by
 68 the secretary.
- 69 10. A representative from a community-based care lead
 70 agency that delivers child welfare services in a county defined
 71 as urban by the most recent United States Census, appointed by
 72 the secretary.
- 73 11. A licensed foster parent, appointed by the secretary.
- 74 12. A representative from a residential group care
 75 provider, appointed by the secretary.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

99 (d) Assessing the comprehensiveness and effectiveness of
100 existing policies and procedures for preventing children in out-

101 of-home care from going missing, for promptly determining
102 whether such children are missing, and for locating such
103 children.

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

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

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

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

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

138 (6) REPORTS.—

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

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

151 House of Representatives a report that compiles the findings and
152 recommendations of the task force.

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

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

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