
HOUSE BILL 2958

State of Washington 58th Legislature 2004 Regular Session

By Representatives O'Brien, Carrell, Morrell, Lantz, Lovick and Rockefeller

Read first time 01/23/2004. Referred to Committee on Criminal Justice & Corrections.

1 AN ACT Relating to missing person reports; creating new sections;
2 and declaring an emergency.

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that there is no
5 uniform way amongst police agencies across the state for taking reports
6 on missing persons. Federal and state statutes require local law
7 enforcement agencies to immediately take missing person reports for
8 children and then file and enter that information into the state
9 missing person computerized network after notification of a missing
10 child. However, there is no such consistent policy or requirement for
11 cases involving missing adults.

12 Some law enforcement agencies impose waiting periods of up to
13 seventy-two hours before accepting a missing adult report, others will
14 only take a report if it is filed by a relative, and still others will
15 simply decline to take a report if there are no signs that the missing
16 person is endangered or if the person happens to live or disappear from
17 outside of their jurisdiction.

18 The legislature believes that, at a minimum, a written or

1 electronic report should be initiated for all reports of missing
2 persons made to law enforcement agencies across the state.

3 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** The Washington association of sheriffs and
4 police chiefs shall conduct a study on the practice of taking missing
5 person reports by law enforcement agencies in Washington. The study
6 shall:

7 (1) Determine the feasibility and costs to local law enforcement
8 agencies for taking telephonic recordings of missing person reports;

9 (2) Identify ways to eliminate waiting periods for law enforcement
10 officers to take a report;

11 (3) Identify a way to track and enter information from such reports
12 into a state data base;

13 (4) Identify ways to more rapidly identify human remains;

14 (5) Identify ways for more rapid prosecution of those convicted of
15 harming or kidnapping a missing person;

16 (6) Identify what is currently in state and federal statutes
17 regarding how to handle missing person reports;

18 (7) Identify whether local law enforcement agencies show any
19 consistency of compliance to current statutes; and

20 (8) Make recommendations on how to improve how missing persons are
21 reported, how missing reports are handled, how missing persons are
22 identified, and how human remains of missing persons are identified and
23 handled.

24 The study shall be submitted to the governor and legislature by
25 December 1, 2004.

26 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** This act is necessary for the immediate
27 preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the
28 state government and its existing public institutions, and takes effect
29 immediately.

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