
**Public Safety & Emergency Preparedness
Committee**

HB 2477

Brief Description: Concerning missing endangered persons.

Sponsors: Representatives Zeiger, Dammeier, Wilcox, Appleton, Ladenburg, Johnson, Dahlquist, Kelley, Orcutt and Roberts.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Expands the Washington State Patrol's Missing Person Clearinghouse to include endangered persons.

Hearing Date: 1/27/12

Staff: Yvonne Walker (786-7841).

Background:

The Washington State Patrol (WSP) operates a Missing Children Clearinghouse (clearinghouse) through its Missing and Unidentified Person Unit which includes the maintenance and operation of a toll-free 24-hour telephone hotline. The clearinghouse distributes information to local law enforcement agencies, school districts, the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS), and the general public regarding missing persons. The information includes pictures, bulletins, training sessions, reports, and biographical materials that assist in local law enforcement efforts in locating missing persons. The WSP also maintains an interface with local law enforcement and the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs missing persons' website, the toll-free 24-hour hotline, and national and other statewide missing persons systems and clearinghouses.

The WSP is also the lead agency for the America's Missing Broadcast Emergency Response (AMBER Alert) plan that includes the voluntary cooperation between local, state, tribal, and other law enforcement agencies, state government agencies, radio and television stations, and

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cable and satellite systems used to enhance the public's ability to assist in recovering abducted children. Local law enforcement agencies that have approved AMBER Alert plans in place with the WSP are able to immediately broadcast abduction information to the community about a missing child. The AMBER Alert provides details about the child and the perpetrator (if known), including descriptive information.

Generally, after a report is taken regarding a missing child, local law enforcement agencies must file an official missing person report and enter biographical information into the state's missing person computerized network within 12 hours after the notification is received by the agency. This network is connected to the Federal Bureau of Investigation's National Crime Information Center's database.

Summary of Bill:

The WSP's clearinghouse is expanded to include missing endangered persons. The clearinghouse must distribute information to local law enforcement agencies, school districts, the DSHS, and the general public regarding endangered persons.

After a missing person report is taken, the period of time that a local law enforcement agency has to file the report and enter the biographical information into the state's missing person computerized network is reduced to six hours following notification of the missing person.

The WSP's AMBER Alert plan is expanded to include social media pages and sites to enhance the public's ability to assist in recovering abducted children and missing endangered persons.

A "missing endangered person" is defined to include any person believed to be in danger because of age, health, mental or physical disability, in combination with environmental or weather conditions, or is believed to be unable to return to safety without assistance.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.