

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
1985 SESSION

CHAPTER 765  
SENATE BILL 18

AN ACT TO ESTABLISH THE NORTH CAROLINA CENTER FOR MISSING CHILDREN.

Whereas, the 1984 Governor's Task Force on missing children was convened to study the problem of missing children by evaluating the adequacy of existing laws relating to missing children, by reviewing collections and analyses of data on missing children, by reviewing public and private responses to reports of missing children, and by identifying and developing effective information and education programs on missing children; and

Whereas, the 1984 Governor's Task Force, finding that one-fourth of the State's population is under 18 years of age, made the following recommendations to protect North Carolina's children:

- (1) Parents and caretakers should report the disappearance of a child to local law enforcement as soon as it is learned that a child is missing;
- (2) Law enforcement agencies should make immediate responses to reports of missing children;
- (3) The Police Information Network should immediately be provided with resources to allow it to expand the standard reporting form to obtain necessary information on missing children;
- (4) The Governor should immediately establish by executive order the North Carolina Missing Children's Information Center and the General Assembly should enact legislation establishing such a center in the statutes;
- (5) Safety house programs should be established in every county;
- (6) The General Assembly should amend Chapter 15B of the General Statutes to make clear that children who are innocent victims of criminal acts may claim compensation from the North Carolina Crime Victims Compensation Commission;
- (7) Every North Carolina child should have the opportunity to have fingerprints taken for safekeeping by the parents;
- (8) Call-back programs should be established in every North Carolina school;
- (9) The North Carolina Justice Academy should develop and present appropriate training for law enforcement on the problems of missing children;
- (10) Local task forces should be established to foster cooperation and improve local services for missing children;

- (11) Missing Child Teams of police and social workers should be established in local areas; and
- (12) The General Assembly should create a legislative study commission to consider legislation that will help prevent missing children; and

Whereas, 1984 Executive Order No. 112, issued on and effective October 25, 1984, addressed the recommendations of the task force that could be ordered by executive order, including establishing the North Carolina Missing Children's Information Center within the Department of Crime Control and Public Safety and mandating that the Governor's Crime Commission report to the 1985 General Assembly its recommendations regarding changes in the law necessary to carry out the Task Force's and the Governor's Advocacy Council on Children and Youth's recommendations; and

Whereas, the General Assembly recognizes the vital need to continue examining ways to protect all the State's children and to continue and make statutory the North Carolina Center for Missing Children as a vital mechanism to ensure that parents, caretakers, children, and all interested, federal, State, and local private and public agencies, groups, and individuals have a single resource center that will respond to reports of missing children by authorizing various methods to locate a child and collaborate with appropriate State, federal, and local authorities to return located children to parents, guardians, and legal custodians; Now, therefore,

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

Section 1. Chapter 143B is amended by adding a new Part to Article 11 to read:

"Part 5A.

"North Carolina Center for Missing Children.

"§ 143B-495. **North Carolina Center for Missing Children.**— There is established within the Department of Crime Control and Public Safety the North Carolina Center for Missing Children, which shall be organized and staffed in accordance with applicable laws. The Center shall:

- (1) Assist law enforcement in responding to reports of missing children and work with other State agencies to make State resources available;
- (2) Gather and distribute information and data on missing children;
- (3) Encourage research and study on missing children and on prevention of child abduction and the prevention of the exploitation of missing children;
- (4) Serve as a statewide resource center to assist local communities in programs and initiatives to prevent child abduction and the exploitation of missing children;
- (5) Continue increasing public awareness of the reasons why children are missing and the vulnerability of missing children;
- (6) Achieve maximum cooperation with other agencies of the State, with agencies of other states and the federal government and with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children in rendering assistance to missing children and their

parents, guardians, and legal custodians; and cooperate with interstate and federal efforts to identify deceased children;

(7) Forward the appropriate information to the Police Information Network to assist it in maintaining and publishing a directory of currently missing children. The Police Information Network shall issue all information on missing children to appropriate law enforcement agencies throughout the State and to the Center. The information shall include information on children who have been found;

(8) Maintain a directory of existing public and private agencies, groups, and individuals that provide effective assistance to families in the areas of prevention of child abduction, location of missing children, and follow-up services to the child and family, as determined by the Secretary of Crime Control and Public Safety;

(9) Annually compile and publish reports on the actual number of children missing each year, listing the categories and causes, when known, for the disappearances;

(10) Provide follow-up referrals for services to missing children and their families;

(11) Maintain a toll-free 1-800 telephone service that will be in service at all times; and

(12) Perform such other activities that the Secretary of Crime Control and Public Safety considers necessary to carry out the intent of its mandate.

In carrying out its mandate the Center established by this section shall take into consideration the information, publications, and recommendations of the North Carolina Missing Children's Information Center established by 1984 Executive Order No. 112, effective October 25, 1984.

The Secretary of Crime Control and Public Safety shall adopt rules necessary to enable the North Carolina Center for Missing Children to carry out its mandate."

Sec. 2. Funds for the North Carolina Center for Missing Children established by Section 1 of this act shall be allocated from the current budget of Department of Crime Control and Public Safety.

Sec. 3. This act is effective upon ratification.

In the General Assembly read three times and ratified, this the 15th day of July, 1985.