HOUSE BILL 698

Short Title:	Center for Missing Persons to Highway Patrol.	(Public)
Sponsors:	Representatives Miller and Pyrtle (Primary Sponsors). *For a complete list of sponsors, refer to the North Carolina General Assembly web site.*	
Referred to:	Emergency Management and Disaster Recovery, if favorable, State and Local Government, if favorable, Rules, Calendar, and Operations of the House	

April 3, 2025

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT TO TRANSFER THE NORTH CAROLINA CENTER FOR MISSING PERSONS TO THE STATE HIGHWAY PATROL.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. All functions, powers, duties, and obligations vested in the North Carolina Center for Missing Persons in the Department of Public Safety are transferred to, vested in, and consolidated within the State Highway Patrol by a Type I transfer, as defined in G.S. 143A-6.

SECTION 2. Article 17 of Chapter 143B of the General Statutes, as enacted by S.L. 2024-57, is amended by adding a new Part 4 to be entitled "North Carolina Center for Missing Persons."

SECTION 3. Subpart B of Part 5 of Article 13 of Chapter 143B of the General Statutes is recodified as Part 4 of Article 17 of Chapter 143B of the General Statutes, as enacted by S.L. 2024-57, as follows:

Former Citation	Recodified Citation
143B-1010	143B-1760
143B-1011	143B-1761
143B-1012	143B-1762
143B-1013	143B-1763
143B-1014	143B-1764
143B-1015	143B-1765
143B-1016	143B-1766
143B-1017	143B-1767
143B-1018	143B-1768
143B-1019	143B-1769
143B-1020	143B-1770
143B-1021	143B-1771
143B-1022	143B-1772
143B-1023	143B-1773

SECTION 4. Part 4 of Article 17 of Chapter 143B of the General Statutes, as recodified by Section 3 of this act, reads as rewritten:

"Part 4. North Carolina Center for Missing Persons.

"**§ 143B-1760. North Carolina Center for Missing Persons established.**

There is established within the ~~Department of Public Safety~~ State Highway Patrol the North Carolina Center for Missing Persons, which shall be organized and staffed in accordance with applicable laws. The purpose of the Center is to serve as a central repository for information regarding missing persons and missing children, with special emphasis on missing children. The Center may utilize the Federal Bureau of Investigation/National Crime Information Center's missing person computerized file (hereinafter referred to as FBI/NCIC) through the use of the Police Information Network in the North Carolina Department of Justice.

…

"**§ 143B-1762. Control of the Center.**

The Center is under the direction of the ~~Secretary of the Department of Public Safety~~ Commander of the State Highway Patrol and may be organized and structured in a manner as the Secretary deems appropriate to ensure that the objectives of the Center are achieved. The ~~Secretary~~ Commander may employ those Center personnel as the General Assembly may authorize and provide funding for.

"**§ 143B-1763. ~~Secretary~~ Commander to adopt rules.**

The ~~Secretary~~ Commander of the State Highway Patrol shall adopt rules prescribing all of the following:

(1) Procedures for accepting and disseminating information maintained at the Center.

(2) The confidentiality of the data and information, including the missing person report, maintained by the Center.

(3) The proper disposition of all obsolete data, including the missing person report; provided, data for an individual who has reached the age of 18 and remains missing must be preserved.

(4) Procedures allowing a communication link with the Police Information Network and the FBI/NCIC's missing person file to ensure compliance with FBI/NCIC policies.

(5) Forms, including but not limited to a missing person report, considered necessary for the efficient and proper operation of the Center.

…

"**§ 143B-1765. Dissemination of missing persons data by law-enforcement agencies.**

…

If the report involves a missing child and the report meets the criteria established in ~~G.S. 143B-1021(b),~~ G.S. 143B-1771(b), as soon as practicable after receipt of the report, the law enforcement agency shall notify the Center and the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children of the relevant data about the missing child.

…

"**§ 143B-1766. Responsibilities of Center.**

The Center shall do all of the following:

…

(9) 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 missing persons, and follow-up services to the child or person and family, as determined by the ~~Secretary of Public Safety.~~Commander of the State Highway Patrol.

…

(13) Perform such other activities that the ~~Secretary of Public Safety~~ Commander of the State Highway Patrol considers necessary to carry out the intent of its mandate.

…

"**§ 143B-1768. Release of information by Center.**

The following may make inquiries of, and receive data or information from, the Center:

…

(4) Any person engaged in bona fide research when approved by the ~~Secretary;~~ Commander of the State Highway Patrol; provided, no names or addresses may be supplied to this person.

(5) Any other person authorized by the Secretary of the ~~Department of Public Safety~~ Commander of the State Highway Patrol pursuant to ~~G.S. 143B-1013.~~G.S. 143B-1763.

"**§ 143B-1769. Provision of toll-free service; instructions to callers; communication with law-enforcement agencies.**

The Center shall provide a toll-free telephone line for anyone to report the disappearance of any individual or the sighting of any missing child or missing person. The Center personnel shall instruct the caller, in the case of a report concerning the disappearance of an individual, of the requirements contained in ~~G.S. 143B-1014~~ G.S. 143B-1764 of first having to submit a missing person report on the individual to the law-enforcement agency having jurisdiction of the area in which the individual became or is believed to have become missing. Any law-enforcement agency may retrieve information imparted to the Center by means of this phone line. The Center shall directly communicate any report of a sighting of a missing person or a missing child to the law-enforcement agency having jurisdiction in the area of disappearance or sighting.

"**§ 143B-1770. Improper release of information; penalty.**

Any person working under the supervision of the Director of Victims and Justice Services who knowingly and willfully releases, or authorizes the release of, any data, information, or records maintained or possessed by the Center to any agency, entity, or person other than as specifically permitted by ~~Subpart B~~ this Part or in violation of any rule adopted by the ~~Secretary~~ Commander of the State Highway Patrol is guilty of a Class 2 misdemeanor.

"**§ 143B-1771. North Carolina AMBER Alert System established.**

(a) There is established within the North Carolina Center for Missing Persons the AMBER Alert System. The purpose of AMBER Alert is to provide a statewide system for the rapid dissemination of information regarding abducted children.

(b) The AMBER Alert System shall make every effort to disseminate information on missing children as quickly as possible when all of the following criteria are met:

(1) The child is 17 years of age or ~~younger;~~younger.

(2) ~~The~~ If abduction is ~~not known or~~ suspected to be by a parent of the child, ~~unless~~ the child's life ~~is~~ must be suspected to be in imminent danger of serious injury or ~~death;~~death.

(3) The child is ~~believed:~~believed (i) to have been abducted and (ii) to be in danger of injury or death.

~~a. To have been abducted, or~~

~~b. To be in danger of injury or death;~~

(4) The child is not a runaway or voluntarily ~~missing; and~~missing.

(5) The abduction has been reported to and investigated by a law enforcement agency.

If the abduction of the child is known or suspected to be by a parent of the child, the Center, in its discretion, may disseminate information through the AMBER Alert System if the child is believed to be in danger of injury or death.

…

(f) The ~~Department of Public Safety,~~ State Highway Patrol, on behalf of the Center, may accept grants, contributions, devises, and gifts, which shall be kept in a separate fund, which shall be nonreverting, and shall be used to fund the operations of the Center and the AMBER Alert System.

"**§ 143B-1772. North Carolina ~~Missing Endangered System~~ Silver Alert established.**

(a) There is established within the North Carolina Center for Missing Persons the ~~Missing Endangered System.~~ Silver Alert. The purpose of the ~~Missing Endangered System~~ Silver Alert is to provide a statewide system for the rapid dissemination of information regarding a missing person ~~or missing child~~ aged 65 or older who is believed to be suffering from dementia, Alzheimer's disease, or a cognitive impairment ~~that, in light of the person's or child's missing status, requires the person or child to be protected from potential abuse or other physical harm, neglect, or exploitation.~~that causes an irreversible deterioration of intellectual faculties that makes them unable to meet their own needs or to seek help without assistance.

(b) If the Center or a law enforcement agency receives a request that involves a missing person ~~or missing child~~ as described in subsection (a) of this section, and at the time of receipt no more than 72 hours have passed since the person ~~or child~~ went missing, the Center ~~or law enforcement agency~~ shall issue an alert providing for rapid dissemination of information statewide regarding the missing ~~person or missing child.~~ person. The Center ~~or law enforcement agency~~ shall make every effort to disseminate the information as quickly as possible when the person's ~~or child's~~ status as missing has been reported to a law enforcement ~~agency.~~agency, including procedures for the use of the Wireless Emergency Alert.

(c) The Center ~~and all law enforcement agencies~~ shall adopt guidelines and develop procedures for issuing ~~an~~ a 90-day alert for missing persons ~~and missing children~~ as described in subsection (a) of this section and shall provide education and training to encourage radio and television broadcasters to participate in the alert. The guidelines and procedures shall ensure that specific health information about the missing person ~~or missing child~~ is not made public through the alert or otherwise.

(d) The Center ~~and all law enforcement agencies~~ shall consult with the Department of Transportation and develop a procedure for the use of overhead permanent changeable message signs to provide information on the missing person ~~or missing child~~ meeting the criteria of this section when information is available that would enable motorists to assist in the recovery of the missing ~~person or missing child.~~ person. The Center and the Department of Transportation shall develop guidelines for the content, length, and frequency of any message to be placed on an overhead permanent changeable message sign.

"**§ 143B-1773. North Carolina Blue Alert System established.**

…

(c) The Center shall adopt guidelines and develop procedures for the statewide implementation of the Blue Alert System and shall provide education and training to encourage radio and television broadcasters to participate in the ~~alert.~~alert, including procedures for the use of the Emergency Alert System and the Wireless Emergency Alert.

…

"**§ 143B-1774. North Carolina Missing Endangered Alert established.**

(a) There is established within the North Carolina Center for Missing Persons the Missing Endangered Alert. The purpose of the Missing Endangered Alert is to provide a statewide system for the rapid dissemination of information regarding a missing person, aged 64 or younger, or missing child who is believed to be suffering from dementia, Alzheimer's disease, or a cognitive impairment that causes an irreversible deterioration of intellectual faculties that makes them unable to meet their own needs or to seek help without assistance and that is not a risk to the general public.

(b) If the Center receives a request that involves a missing person or missing child as described in subsection (a) of this section, and at the time of receipt no more than 72 hours have passed since the person or child went missing, the Center shall issue an alert providing for rapid dissemination of information statewide regarding the missing person or missing child. The Center shall make every effort to disseminate the information as quickly as possible when the person's

or child's status as missing has been reported to a law enforcement agency, including procedures for the use of the Wireless Emergency Alert.

(c) The Center shall adopt guidelines and develop procedures for issuing a 90-day alert for missing persons and missing children as described in subsection (a) of this section and shall provide education and training to encourage radio and television broadcasters to participate in the alert. The guidelines and procedures shall ensure that specific health information about the missing person or missing child is not made public through the alert or otherwise.

(d) The Center shall consult with the Department of Transportation and develop a procedure for the use of overhead permanent changeable message signs to provide information on the missing person or missing child meeting the criteria of this section when information is available that would enable motorists to assist in the recovery of the missing person or missing child. The Center and the Department of Transportation shall develop guidelines for the content, length, and frequency of any message to be placed on an overhead permanent changeable message sign.

"**§ 143B-1775. North Carolina Ashanti Alert established.**

(a) There is established within the North Carolina Center for Missing Persons the Ashanti Alert. The purpose of the Ashanti Alert is to provide a statewide system for the rapid dissemination of information regarding a missing person over 18 years of age that is suspected to have been abducted and there is both abductor and vehicle information available.

(b) If the Center receives a request that involves a missing person as described in subsection (a) of this section, and at the time of receipt no more than 72 hours have passed since the person went missing, the Center shall issue an alert providing for rapid dissemination of information statewide regarding the missing person. The Center shall make every effort to disseminate the information as quickly as possible when the person's status as missing has been reported to a law enforcement agency, including procedures for the use of the Emergency Alert System and the Wireless Emergency Alert.

(c) The Center shall adopt guidelines and develop procedures for issuing a 24-hour alert for missing persons as described in subsection (a) of this section and shall provide education and training to encourage radio and television broadcasters to participate in the alert.

(d) The Center shall consult with the Department of Transportation and develop a procedure for the use of overhead permanent changeable message signs to provide information on the missing person or missing child meeting the criteria of this section when information is available that would enable motorists to assist in the recovery of the missing person or missing child. The Center and the Department of Transportation shall develop guidelines for the content, length, and frequency of any message to be placed on an overhead permanent changeable message sign.

"**§ 143B-1776. North Carolina Missing – Weather Alert established.**

(a) There is established within the North Carolina Center for Missing Persons the Missing – Weather Alert. The purpose of the Missing – Weather Alert is to provide a statewide system for the rapid dissemination of information regarding a missing person or child that is missing during times of extreme heat or cold and is not in a vehicle, or immediately following a significant weather event.

(b) If the Center receives a request that involves a missing person as described in subsection (a) of this section, and at the time of receipt no more than 72 hours have passed since the person went missing, the Center shall issue an alert providing for rapid dissemination of information statewide regarding the missing person. The Center shall make every effort to disseminate the information as quickly as possible, including procedures for the use of the Wireless Emergency Alert.

(c) The Center shall adopt guidelines and develop procedures for issuing a 30-day alert for missing persons as described in subsection (a) of this section and shall provide education and training to encourage radio and television broadcasters to participate in the alert."

SECTION 5. The State Highway Patrol shall adopt rules, or amendments to rules, consistent with the provisions of this act. The State Highway Patrol may use the procedure set forth in G.S. 150B-21.1 to adopt or amend any rules as required under this section.

SECTION 6. This act is effective when it becomes law.