OHIO LEGISLATIVE SERVICE COMMISSION

www.lsc.ohio.gov

Office of Research and Drafting

Legislative Budget Office

H.B. 359
136th General Assembly

Bill Analysis

Click here for H.B. 359's Fiscal Note

Version: As Reported by Senate Armed Services, Veterans Affairs and Public Safety

Primary Sponsors: Reps. C. Thomas and Gross

Ashley F. Dean, Attorney

SUMMARY

- Clarifies that if a missing child has autism spectrum disorder or another developmental disability, the local law enforcement agency must notify the Statewide Emergency Alert Program as soon as certain information has been verified.
- Names the alert for a missing child who has autism spectrum disorder or another developmental disability the Joshua Alert.

DETAILED ANALYSIS

Joshua Alert

Under continuing law, the Statewide Emergency Alert Program for a missing individual who has a mental impairment, has autism spectrum disorder or another developmental disability, or is 65 years old or older, will be implemented only if all of the following activation criteria are met:[1]

- The local investigating law enforcement agency confirms that the individual is missing.
- The individual is 65 years old or older, has a mental impairment, or has either autism spectrum disorder or another developmental disability.
- The disappearance of the individual poses a credible threat of immediate danger of serious bodily harm or death to the individual. A credible threat of immediate danger includes situations in which the missing individual is nonverbal, has limited communication ability, or otherwise lacks the capacity to seek help or ensure the missing individual's own safety.

[1] R.C. 5502.522(B).

- There is sufficient descriptive information about the individual and the circumstances surrounding the individual's disappearance to indicate that activation of the alert will help locate the individual.

A local investigating law enforcement agency is generally not required to notify the Statewide Emergency Alert Program that the law enforcement agency has received information that meets the activation criteria listed above during the first 24 hours after the agency receives the information. Under the bill, if the missing individual is under 18 years old, and has either autism spectrum disorder or another developmental disability, the local investigating law enforcement agency must notify the Statewide Emergency Alert Program that the agency has received information that meets the activation criteria as soon as that information has been verified.[2]

The bill names the alert for a missing child who has autism spectrum disorder or another developmental disability the Joshua Alert.[3]

HISTORY

Action	Date
Introduced	06-12-25
Reported, H. Children and Human Services	10-29-25
Passed House (95-0)	11-12-25
Reported, S. Armed Services, Veterans Affairs and Public Safety	04-21-26

ANHB0359RS-136/ts

[2] R.C. 5502.522(E).

[3] Section 3.