



State of Tennessee

PUBLIC CHAPTER NO. 837

SENATE BILL NO. 1929

By Akbari, Massey

Substituted for: House Bill No. 2223

By Love, Powell, Hardaway

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 38, Chapter 6, Part 1, relative to missing persons.

WHEREAS, the General Assembly of this State finds and declares that:

(1) According to the U.S. Department of Justice Office of Justice Programs, approximately six hundred thousand people go missing every year in the United States. Youth eighteen years of age and under account for about thirty-five percent of these reported cases;

(2) The AMBER Alert system authorizes law enforcement agencies to use digital messaging on overhead roadway signs to assist in recovery efforts for child abduction cases;

(3) The AMBER Alert system must fulfill strict criteria for the message to be broadcast. If those criteria are not met, an AMBER Alert cannot be issued, and the child is labeled as a runaway;

(4) When a missing child is listed as a runaway, the child receives no media coverage and fewer police and government resources are available for the child's recovery; and

(5) Being identified as a runaway can also be a legal loophole for law enforcement because when a child is listed as a runaway, law enforcement is allowed to delay response and investigation time. In cases where the child is mislabeled as a runaway, this delay is crucial time that could be spent locating a child in danger; and

WHEREAS, it is the intent of this General Assembly to provide law enforcement with additional tools to disseminate timely, accurate information to engage the public and the media to more effectively assist with locating children and young women who are missing in this State; now, therefore,

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 38-6-127, is amended by deleting "twenty-one (21) years of age" and substituting "twenty-five (25) years of age".

SECTION 2. This act takes effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it.

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PASSED: April 18, 2024


Randy McNally
RANDY McNALLY
SPEAKER OF THE SENATE


Cameron Sexton
CAMERON SEXTON, SPEAKER
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APPROVED this 1st day of May 2024


Bill Lee
BILL LEE, GOVERNOR