SENATE RESOLUTION 21-005


CONCERNING THE DESIGNATION OF FEBRUARY 4, 2021, AS "MISSING PERSONS DAY" IN COLORADO.

WHEREAS, Each year, hundreds of thousands of families are faced with what President Ronald Reagan called "the stark terror of a unique tragedy", a missing family member; and

WHEREAS, Every 40 seconds, someone goes missing in America. Approximately 2,300 Americans are reported missing every day, and there are as many as 90,000 active missing persons cases in the United States at any given time; and

WHEREAS, By December 31, 2019, the Federal Bureau of Investigation reported 87,438 active missing persons in the United States, with nearly 44 percent being juveniles under the age of 21; and

WHEREAS, Children and adults go missing from their families for a number of devastating reasons: They run away or wander and become lost; they disappear under circumstances indicating that their disappearance may not have been voluntary; or they go missing under suspicious circumstances, indicating that they may be in physical danger or the victims of foul play; and

WHEREAS, In 2002, Governor Bill Owens signed House Bill 02-1083, establishing the AMBER (America's Missing: Broadcast
Emergency Response) Alert program in Colorado, named after nine-year-old Amber Hagerman, who was abducted and killed in Texas in 1996. The program ensures that local law enforcement agencies can use the Emergency Alert System in Colorado to broadcast information to alert citizens of missing children; and

WHEREAS, Since 1996, AMBER Alerts have successfully recovered 988 children nationally; and

WHEREAS, For all the important work done to recover missing children, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children reported on its website in 2019 that 421,394 missing child reports were made to law enforcement in 2019, and the organization lists 73 missing Coloradan children from every area of the state. Although all disappeared from their families when they were children, some have been missing for decades; and

WHEREAS, While too many families grieve and hope for the return of their missing children, others are in search of their missing family members who are of all ages; and

WHEREAS, According to the Alzheimer's Association, six in ten people with Alzheimer's or dementia will wander and may become lost, a frequent and frightening challenge for their caregivers and families; and

WHEREAS, In 2007, Governor Bill Ritter signed House Bill 07-1005 into law, which expanded the senior alert program to include people with developmental disabilities, connecting caretakers with law enforcement officials who can use the reach of the radio, television stations, and other media to alert the community; and

WHEREAS, The awareness of citizens, media, and law enforcement, as well as their support, their efforts, and their search for missing persons, must continue; and

WHEREAS, The public plays a critical role in the success of the AMBER Alert and other alert programs: They become the eyes and ears of law enforcement and can be on the lookout for the missing person; and

WHEREAS, The common misconception that a person must be absent
for at least 24 hours before being legally classified as missing is
dangerous and incorrect. When there is evidence of violence or of an
unusual absence, it is critical that an investigation begin promptly; and

WHEREAS, New advances in technology must be utilized and made
available to locate the missing; and

WHEREAS, The state of Colorado is committed to the safety and
well-being of its citizens, both children and adults; and

WHEREAS, The designation of "Missing Persons Day" in Colorado
will firmly embed the importance of missing persons and their families
and friends in our state calendar and will raise a level of awareness with
other cities and states that have already designated a "Missing Persons
Day"; and

WHEREAS, The designation of "Missing Persons Day" in Colorado
offers a platform to plan events that will connect families with resources
to help identify and find their loved ones, including those who have been
missing for many years; and

WHEREAS, The designation of "Missing Persons Day" in Colorado
will ensure that the families and friends of the missing know that they are
not alone in this tragedy of uncertainties and lack of closure, which leads
to extreme suffering and long-lasting effects on the health, finances, and
relationships of those left behind; and

WHEREAS, Every missing person is someone's son or daughter,
father or mother, brother or sister, partner or friend, and every missing
person deserves to be searched for and found; now, therefore,

Be It Resolved by the Senate of the Seventy-third General Assembly
of the State of Colorado:

(1) That we, the members of the Senate, recognize the epidemic of the
missing in America as "The Silent Mass Disaster" and empathize with the
ongoing suffering of the families and friends of those who are missing;

(2) That we recognize the importance of raising awareness of the
number of people who go missing in Colorado each year;

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(3) That we applaud the committed efforts of families, law enforcement agencies, and concerned citizens who work to locate missing persons;

(4) That we encourage the continued support of worthy initiatives and private and public programs to increase efforts to locate missing persons;

(5) That we hereby designate February 4 of each year as "Missing Persons Day" and support the goals and ideals of the day; and

Be It Further Resolved, That copies of this Resolution be sent to Voices of Victims; Families of Homicide Victims and Missing Persons, Inc. (FOHVAMP); Colorado Victims for Justice; the Colorado Organization for Victim Assistance (COVA); and the Colorado Bureau of Investigation.

Leroy M. Garcia
PRESIDENT OF
THE SENATE

Cindi L. Markwell
SECRETARY OF
THE SENATE