

FIND Act

Sponsor Testimony

Thank you, Madam Chairman.....Thank you for providing my colleague and I the opportunity to give testimony on HB217 - the FIND Act.

Imagine for a moment that you are the parent of a missing child. There is nothing more frightening in the world. That child has gone missing possibly because of the criminal act.....or maybe that child is simply a runaway. Regardless of the circumstances, the disappearance is paralyzing.

- Too often, when children go missing in this country, they vanish across state lines and they become hard to locate.
 - The bill **Representative Cockley** and I have drafted, should it become law, will help reunite those missing children with their families.
- Additionally, this legislation will help families track and reunite with missing adults who have disappeared for a variety of reasons:
 - Possibly because of a physical or mental disability
 - Maybe under suspicious or non-voluntary circumstances
 - Or for other reasons
- Finally, this legislation would provide a nationwide, searchable database accessible to law enforcement and to aggrieved families hoping to find the unidentified remains of a deceased loved one.

In short, this legislation – the FIND Act - would further integrate the existing law enforcement missing persons reporting system(s) with the only national repository for missing, unidentified, and unclaimed persons cases.

The National Missing and Unidentified persons System (known as **NamUs**) was created in 2003 by experts at the **Nations Institute of Justice**.

- It is currently used in 17 states and it has led to the location and identification of hundreds of living and deceased persons.
- The key to the Act is that it encourages inter-agency cooperation and information sharing.
- It requires the State Attorney General to publish best practices for missing persons cases.
- And it encourages law enforcement agencies to adopt internal policies based upon these protocols.

At any given time, up to 100,000 persons may be reported missing in the United States with as many as 600,000 reported annually.

- While many of these individuals are found alive and well, some become long-term missing persons.
- At the same time, federal, state and local death investigators are constantly working to provide names to thousands of deceased persons nationwide.
- Over 11,000 sets of unidentified human remains were held in medical examiner and coroner offices throughout the U.S. according to the 2018 Census of Medical Examiners and Coroners.

It is time to act.....it is time to pass this important legislation so that we can begin to reunite families with their missing members.....and begin to give closure to families who have none.

I thank you for your attention and we stand ready to answer your questions.

Thank you!