



CENTER FOR THE RIGHTS
OF ABUSED CHILDREN

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Missouri Governor Michael Parson signs critical bill to find children in foster care who go missing and ensure relatives are notified when a child enters the state's care

Jefferson City, MO – Today, Governor Michael Parson signed Senate Bill 186, which will improve the placement of abused and neglected children with willing relatives and ensure the state searches for and finds the [nearly 1,000 children](#) disappearing from the state's care each year.

"These new laws will ensure abused and neglected children are quickly placed with relatives, experience fewer disruptions, and enjoy the safety that comes from a loving family," said Darcy Olsen, CEO of the Center for the Rights of Abused Children.

These reforms play a crucial role in strengthening Missouri's preference for relative placements and improving a child's stability by:

- Ensuring thorough searches for relatives as soon as a child enters care;
- Providing relatives with timely information and an opportunity to be involved in the child's life; and
- Increasing accountability by requiring the state's search to be filed with the court in every child's case.

Federal investigators found that nearly 1,000 Missouri children disappear from the foster care system annually, and many are never searched for or found.

Senate Bill 186 requires the state to report on and to search for any child who disappears from care, including:

- Mandating any agency, placement provider, parent, or guardian, with the care and custody of a child who is missing from care, immediately report to law enforcement and the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children;
- Requiring Children's Division develop prevention protocols and improved searches;
- Requiring up-to-date photographs in every child's case file to help police identify missing children; and
- Ensuring Missouri keeps searching for missing children.

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About the Center for The Rights of Abused Children: The Center for the Rights of Abused Children fights for better futures for America's abused children with a pro bono Children's Law Clinic, common-sense reforms, and public interest litigation. Join our life-saving work to end violence against children today, thecenterforchildren.org.

Contact: Chris Clough at (602) 710-1135 x708 or chris@thecenterforchildren.org