
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO MISSING PERSONS.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that alert programs like
2 the AMBER alert and silver alert have been highly successful
3 tools for helping to locate missing persons. According to the
4 National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, since the
5 implementation of the AMBER alert program in 1996, 1,221 missing
6 children have been recovered due to its use. The same center
7 reports that since 2022, more than six thousand silver alerts
8 have been activated nationally, and more than eighty per cent of
9 those missing elders were safely located.

10 The legislature recognizes that in missing persons cases,
11 it can be critical to locate the person quickly. Law
12 enforcement agencies have emphasized that the first seventy-two
13 hours of a missing person investigation offer the best hope of
14 finding helpful witnesses and of locating the person alive. By
15 quickly disseminating information in cases involving child
16 abduction or a missing elder, the AMBER alert and silver alert
17 programs allow the community to assist in the search.



1 The legislature also recognizes that a disproportionate
2 number of the State's missing person cases involve indigenous
3 persons, specifically Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander women
4 and girls. According to Missing Children's Center Hawaii, of
5 the thirty-seven publicly reported missing persons cases between
6 2020 and 2022, seventy-seven per cent were female, and
7 eighty-four per cent were Native Hawaiian. Native Hawaiian and
8 Pacific Islander women and girls who go missing are also more
9 likely than people from other demographics to become victims of
10 sex trafficking. Between October 2021 and May 2022, sex
11 trafficking victims represented fifty-nine percent of the
12 clients seeking social services through the nonprofit Susannah
13 Wesley Community Center, and of those, forty-five per cent were
14 Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander.

15 Based on the success of the AMBER alert and silver alert
16 programs, the legislature finds that a dedicated alert is needed
17 to help address the widespread problem of missing indigenous
18 persons in Hawaii.

19 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to establish a
20 missing indigenous person alert program to supplement the AMBER



1 alert and silver alert programs and to help safely locate more
2 missing people.

3 SECTION 2. Chapter 353C, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
4 amended by adding a new section to be appropriately designated
5 and to read as follows:

6 "§353C- Missing indigenous person alert program. (a)

7 The department shall develop and implement a missing indigenous
8 person alert program to rapidly disseminate information about a
9 person subject to the alert.

10 (b) If a person is reported missing to a law enforcement
11 agency and that agency determines that the conditions of
12 subsection (g) are met, the agency may request the department to
13 activate a missing indigenous person alert. If the department
14 concurs that the conditions of subsection (g) are met, the
15 department shall activate the alert within the geographical area
16 requested by the investigating law enforcement agency.

17 (c) Radio, television, cable, and satellite systems are
18 encouraged, but not required, to cooperate with disseminating
19 the information contained in a missing indigenous person alert.

20 (d) Upon the activation of a missing indigenous person
21 alert, the department shall assist the investigating law



1 enforcement agency by issuing a be-on-the-lookout alert, issuing
2 an electronic flyer, or activating a changeable message sign, as
3 permissible.

4 (e) The department, as permitted, may use the Wireless
5 Emergency Alerts System.

6 (f) The department, as permitted, may use a changeable
7 message sign if the following conditions are met:

8 (1) The investigating law enforcement agency determines
9 that a vehicle may be involved in the missing person
10 incident; and

11 (2) Specific vehicle identification is available for
12 public dissemination.

13 (g) A law enforcement agency may request from the
14 department that a missing indigenous person alert be activated
15 if the agency determines that all of the following conditions
16 are met regarding the investigation of the missing person:

17 (1) The missing person is indigenous, including Native
18 Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, Native American, Native
19 Alaskan, or First Nations;

20 (2) The law enforcement agency has utilized all available
21 local resources;



1 (3) The law enforcement agency determines that the person
2 has gone missing under unexplained or suspicious
3 circumstances;

4 (4) The law enforcement agency believes that the missing
5 person is in the company of a potentially dangerous
6 person, or there are other factors indicating that the
7 missing person may be in peril, including factors
8 indicating that the missing person has been the victim
9 of domestic violence; and

10 (5) There is information that, if disseminated to the
11 public, could assist in the safe recovery of the
12 missing person.

13 (h) For purposes of this section, "missing indigenous
14 person alert" means a notification activated pursuant to this
15 section, designed to issue and coordinate alerts with respect to
16 a situation that meets the conditions of subsection (g)."

17 SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general
18 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so much
19 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2025-2026 and the
20 same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year



H.B. NO. 1357

1 2026-2027 for the establishment and use of the missing
2 indigenous person alert program.

3 The sums appropriated shall be expended by the department
4 of law enforcement for the purposes of this Act.

5 SECTION 4. New statutory material is underscored.

6 SECTION 5. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2025.

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INTRODUCED BY: Karani Souza

JAN 23 2025



H.B. NO. 1357

Report Title:

Missing Persons; Missing Indigenous Women; Alert; Appropriation

Description:

Establishes and appropriates moneys for a Missing Indigenous Person Alert program to help locate indigenous persons who are missing and thought to be in danger.

The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.

