

2025 -- S 0983 SUBSTITUTE A

LC002713/SUB A

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2025

A N A C T

RELATING TO STATE AFFAIRS AND GOVERNMENT -- STATE POLICE

Introduced By: Senators Patalano, Tikoian, LaMountain, Lawson, DiPalma, Ciccone,
Thompson, Burke, Appollonio, and Britto
Date Introduced: April 16, 2025
Referred To: Senate Judiciary

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

- 1 SECTION 1. Chapter 42-28 of the General Laws entitled "State Police" is hereby amended
2 by adding thereto the following sections:
- 3 **42-28-3.7. PURPLE alert.**
- 4 (a) This section establishes the PURPLE alert program to immediately alert the community
5 about a missing adult with a serious or substantial physical, behavioral health, neurological
6 disability, or condition that objectively establishes concerns for the immediate safety and wellbeing
7 of the missing person.
- 8 (b) The division of state police, in consultation with the Rhode Island emergency
9 management agency (RIEMA) and other appropriate agencies shall develop and institute the
10 PURPLE alert program. The PURPLE alert program shall establish a voluntary partnership among
11 law enforcement agencies, media outlets and other appropriate entities to send out emergency alerts
12 designed to expediently assist in locating a PURPLE alert citizen by utilizing available resources
13 including the Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS).
- 14 (c) For purposes of §§ 42-28-3.7 and 42-28-3.8, a "PURPLE alert citizen" means a person:
- 15 (1) Whose whereabouts are unknown;
- 16 (2) Whose domicile at the time the person is reported missing is Rhode Island;
- 17 (3) Whose age at the time the person is reported missing is eighteen (18) years of age or
18 older;
- 19 (4) Who has a serious or substantial physical, behavioral health, neurological disability, or

1 condition that objectively establishes concerns for the immediate safety and wellbeing of the
2 missing person; and

3 (5) Whose disappearance poses a credible threat to the safety and health of such person, as
4 determined by the state police or other law enforcement agency.

5 (d) The serious physical, behavioral health, or neurological disability or condition shall be
6 demonstrated by appropriate documentation presented by the missing person's family, legal
7 guardian, long-term care ombudsman, or long-term care facility where such person resides.
8 Provided, however, that any medical or personal information provided pursuant to this section shall
9 be kept strictly confidential and not subject to disclosure pursuant to chapter 2 of title 36 ("access
10 to public records").

11 (e) If a law enforcement agency has confirmed the disappearance of a missing adult with
12 the above disability or conditions, the law enforcement agency shall immediately obtain descriptive
13 information for the PURPLE alert, contact the state police to provide the descriptive information
14 and identify a point of contact within its agency.

15 (f) The PURPLE alert program shall provide a proactive emergency public alert plan,
16 including, where appropriate, access and use of IPAWS as part of the response to the disappearance
17 of a missing adult with a serious physical, behavioral health, neurological disability or condition.
18 This program shall be capable of being expediently triggered by law enforcement personnel in
19 accordance with protocols, procedures, and rules established by the division of state police in
20 consultation with appropriate law enforcement authorities, the Rhode Island emergency
21 management agency, the department of health, state and local officials and cooperating members
22 of the broadcast media ("PURPLE alert").

23 **42-28-3.8. PURPLE alert procedures for protocol and implementation.**

24 (a) The division of state police in consultation with the Rhode Island emergency
25 management agency (RIEMA) shall establish protocols, procedures, and rules to implement a
26 PURPLE alert. The protocols, procedures, and rules shall be updated as may be necessary in
27 consultation with the entities and agencies involved in the PURPLE alert process to provide
28 effective and efficient procedures to assist law enforcement agencies, broadcast media and other
29 cooperating agencies or entities in providing an emergency alert to the public in response to a
30 missing adult with a serious physical, behavioral health, neurological disability or condition.

31 (b) The Rhode Island emergency management agency ("RIEMA") shall, no later than
32 January 1, 2026, and annually thereafter review the policies and procedures implemented and
33 conducted in accordance with the provisions of this section. The review shall involve all agencies
34 that participate in IPAWS.

1 (c) RIEMA shall conduct and keep records for annual training to be provided for all
2 participating agencies utilizing the IPAWS system. Training pursuant to this subsection shall be
3 mandatory for all personnel employed and involved in conducting IPAWS Purple Alert operations.

4 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF
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- 1 This act would create the PURPLE alert state system to aid in the search for a missing adult
- 2 with a serious physical, behavioral health, neurological disabilities or medical condition.
- 3 This act would take effect upon passage.

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