

WHEREAS, While too many families grieve and hope for their missing children, others are in search of their missing family members of all ages; 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 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; 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 long-term missing loved ones; and

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, in December 31, 2021 the FBI reported 93,718 active missing persons in the United States, with a large portion 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 a physical danger or the victims of foul play; and

WHEREAS, In 2002, Colorado 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 1085 children nationally and 97 due to the Wireless Emergency Alert; and

WHEREAS, For all the important work done to recover missing children, the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children assisted law enforcement and families in 2021 with more than 27,758 cases of missing children nationwide, and the organization lists 155 active missing child cases in Colorado with

posters circulating on nearly 66 of those cases – though all disappeared from their families when they were children, some have been missing for decades; 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-sixth** General Assembly of the State of Colorado, the House of Representatives concurring herein:*

- (1) That we, the members of the General Assembly, 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 numbers of people who go missing in Colorado each year;
- (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
- (6) That we acknowledge the names, and the families, of the Coloradans who are currently missing;