



Arizona unanimously passes bill requiring immediate reporting of missing foster children; HB2098 heads to Governor Ducey's desk

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PHOENIX – Senate Bill 1019, sponsored by Arizona Sen. Nancy Barto, today passed the Arizona legislature unanimously and heads to Arizona Governor Doug Ducey for signature. The legislation adds a critical safeguard for Arizona's foster children by making photo identification cards free for all children in state care.

"20,000 foster children disappear every year. I was shocked to learn how often photographs weren't available to assist law enforcement in their searches," said Rebecca Masterson, Gen Justice Chief Counsel. "Arizona unanimously recognized that this is unacceptable."

Because a majority of missing foster children disappear from group homes, SB1019 requires Arizona group homes to obtain a state ID for all children in their care. If a child goes missing, the child's photo and identifying information can immediately be uploaded to state and federal databases so the child can be found.

The law also makes a photo ID card free for any child in foster care. A foster family or kinship provider can now get the child in their care photograph identification free of charge, no matter the age of the child.

Gen Justice CEO, Darcy Olsen, said, "Most trafficked kids in America are from foster care. Law enforcement told us they needed photographs to fix this, so that's what we did. Now, if a child goes missing from care, our officers have the tools they need." House Bill 2098, sponsored by Representative Jennifer Jermaine, passed the Arizona Legislature unanimously. HB2098 requires law enforcement to submit reports of missing children to the relevant Arizona and national missing persons databases within two hours. In addition to these reporting requirements, the bill

requires that the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children be notified if the missing child is from the foster system.

Every year, 20,000 children go missing from the foster system and Arizona is taking the lead on this issue. This legislative session, Gov. Ducey has already signed SB1019 into law, which requires that foster children in group homes receive photo identification cards, and SB1391 that appoints a lawyer to every child in foster care. Combined with HB2098's increased reporting requirements, Arizona's law enforcement will now have the information necessary to locate missing foster children and the kids themselves will have the advocacy necessary to ensure search and rescue efforts are conducted.

Darcy Olsen, Gen Justice Founder said, "Kids in foster care disappear by the tens of thousands annually, many taken by predatory sex traffickers. They do not have families to search for them and deserve every state resource we have to bring them to safety. I am thrilled to see Arizona leading the nation for America's missing and trafficked foster children." Earlier this year, Olsen co-authored [Disappearing and Dying: Why 20,000 kids disappear from foster care every year and how to end this crisis](#).

About Gen Justice

[Gen Justice](#) is an award-winning charitable organization working to mend the broken child protection system through nonpartisan policy changes and a pro bono Children's Law Clinic.

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