

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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State of Maine
Department of Public Safety
Maine State Police

To: Sen. Beebe-Center, Rep. Hasenfus and distinguished member of the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee

Fr: Lt. Tom Pickering, Maine State Police (MSP), Major Crimes Unit (MCU)-Unsolved

Re: LD 172, *An Act to Require the Maine State Police to Create a Statewide List of Missing Persons and Study Improvements for Investigating Missing Persons Cases*, Preliminary Report and Request for Additional Time.

Date: January 21, 2026

Please accept this as the report of the stakeholders established via LD 172, *An Act to Require the Maine State Police to Create a Statewide List of Missing Persons and Study Improvements for Investigating Missing Persons Cases*. [PL 2025 Ch. 447]

We have had the opportunity to meet in person and review the process for a statewide missing persons list and review law enforcement agency's expectations. We also examined the effectiveness of Maine's Silver Alert program, discussed best practices for missing persons investigations and opened the floor to potential solutions to greater interagency communication and cooperation.

Highlights of recommended changes

The working group met in November and corresponded regarding recommended changes. What follows are some of the recommended changes agreed by participants that the committee could consider in future, though some may require fiscal resources to be allocated for their implementation.

- A downloadable statewide missing person list hosted on the Maine State Police website. Currently there is a link to the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NAMUS) website which contains statewide missing persons information and description of limitations of the MSP missing person list.
- Low-cost automated process to generate a statewide missing person list that will be updated monthly on the Department of Public Safety website.
- A new statewide working group to meet bi-annually to review missing person's cases, review best practices and make any recommendations for training directly to the Maine Criminal Justice Academy (MCJA). All recommended agencies and people will be invited to be a part of the working group.
- A statewide Missing Persons Checklist provided to all Maine law enforcement.

Review process for statewide missing person list and expectations of LE agencies

The working group recommends that a missing person working group be formed permanently and meet bi-annually to review the lists of Maine Missing Persons for recommendation for further potential investigation, searches or offer of resources to the primary investigating agencies. This working group would be comprised of willing experts working together to review and identify needs for individual missing person cases as well as to continue to identify potential future training needs for Maine law enforcement and make that recommendation directly to MCJA.

Currently there are 150 missing people listed as missing from the state of Maine in NAMUS. There are 143 listed as missing from Maine in the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) database. The statewide list with cooperation from all Maine law enforcement and Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME) should reconcile the differences to ensure that Maine's published list, the NAMUS list and NCIC match in the future. The working group will continue to review and reconcile the lists of missing people to ensure accuracy and resources are available to investigating agencies.

New Hampshire recently developed a process to publish and maintain a statewide missing person list on the NH State Police website. NH currently utilizes an analyst from NHIAC and manually generates the New Hampshire missing person list. This analyst also coordinates with agencies of jurisdiction to gather needed missing person information (person description, picture, case details etc.). The analyst creates the list that is updated on the NH DOJ website monthly. The Maine State Police will accomplish Maine's missing person list leveraging technology to provide a fiscal alternative to adding a dedicated person. The missing person information will be pulled directly from the NCIC database monthly. Missing persons photos will be transmitted directly from the investigating agency to the Maine State Police as photos are not able to be pulled from NCIC. The collected missing person information will be populated

into a downloadable PDF that will contain a recent picture, name, investigating law enforcement agency with contact information and a statement of case details.

The working group further recommends that a missing person investigative checklist be provided to all Maine law enforcement. Many Maine law enforcement agencies use a similar checklist, and this working group will standardize the list to provide to the Maine Attorney General's office to incorporate into the AG Death/Missing Person Protocol. The working group will continue to review the checklist to ensure that it is accurate and relevant.

The working group also recommends that more education for law enforcement be given on necessity of a NCIC database entry for missing persons, a missing persons investigative checklist and possibly a stand-alone AG Missing persons protocol to incorporate both best practices and missing persons checklist standards. Currently, missing persons recommendations are covered in AG Death Protocol. The working group will work with MCJA and the AG's office to make any recommended changes in training and missing person investigations.

Reviewing effectiveness of the Silver Alert Program

25 M.R.S. §2202. Silver Alert Program In accordance with this chapter and with the cooperation of the Department of Transportation, the Maine Turnpike Authority, a statewide organization representing broadcast groups in the State, the Office of the Governor and appropriate law enforcement agencies, the department shall develop and implement the Silver Alert Program to be activated on behalf of missing endangered persons. The program must include standards of procedure for local law enforcement agencies to determine that a missing person is a missing endangered person, to determine information to be released regarding the missing endangered person or the circumstances of the person's disappearance and to appropriately activate a Silver Alert to local or statewide law enforcement agencies and to the media, a plan for providing relevant information to the public through an existing system of dynamic message signs located across the State when necessary and training for all law enforcement officers. The Silver Alert Program must be developed and implemented using existing resources. [PL 2021, c. 62, §2 (AMD).]

Below is a breakdown of Silver Alerts from 2023-2025.

Year	Requests	Approved	Denied	Located Before Activation	Returned Home	Located by Family	Located by LE	Located by Public
2023	69	44	19	5	7	4	33	0
2024	53	34	17	2	5	4	12	4
2025	31	21	4	6	3	1	14	1
Total	153	99	40	13	15	9	59	5

- 65% of the 153 total silver alert requests were approved.

- 13% of the approved alerts were located before the Silver Alert was activated.
- 60% of the silver alerts were located by Law Enforcement.
- 15% of the silver alerts returned home on their own.
- 9% of the silver alerts were located by missing people's families.
- 5% of the silver alerts were located by the public

The working group reviewed the Silver Alert law and the statistics listed above. Though only 5% of all silver alerts were located by the public, the working group did not make any recommendations on the effectiveness of the silver alert law. However, the group did learn there are opportunities for improving the timely transmission of information across the multiple entities tasked with posting public notice of silver alert activations. Process improvements for posting information across state messaging systems can be addressed through the existing recommendations outlined above.

In conclusion, a working group will meet biannually to review the states missing persons lists, develop an investigative checklist and provide the checklist to the Maine Attorney General's office for review.