

Submitter: Rowen Hayes  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: House Committee On Judiciary  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2668

To the Honorable,

I support HB 2668. As I am in the Search And Rescue profession with the full faith and credit of my duly elected Sheriff. As a county SAR coordinator and SAR member I have encountered both well meaning exigent volunteers to specific SAR incidents, as well as bad faith actors that wish to seek financial gain from presenting themselves to family members of the lost, missing, injured or deceased. Search And Rescue efforts are often conducted in arduous terrain under extreme weather conditions and require an Incident Command System for an effective Incident Management Team to execute an effective and efficient Search, Rescue or Recovery. Having self proclaimed experts that have not been vetted by any of the statutorily recognized entities only complicates and frustrates an already difficult endeavor, often causing an unnecessary risk, confusion and dismay. An added liability presented by those that introduce themselves into an established or ongoing search and rescue, is bringing false hope and misguided information to an already distressed family. The wrong information provided by these unauthorized actors can result in mistrust of the respective legally established search and rescue teams that are themselves providing correct, however maybe less optimistic information to a grieving family. The few incidents that I have personally encountered where this took place, proved to divert resources to deal with family members who paid money to the "service" of the self appointed SAR expert. The most recent event that comes to mind occurred surrounding an event on the Columbia River, where a young man took his life by jumping from the I-82 bridge between Washington and Oregon. The incident resulted in five legitimate agencies involvement. An actor capitalized on the grief of the family, took money for a "service" and left the family with nothing of value. Adding to the distress of the family that now developed hard feelings towards the lead agency, a county in Washington. Ultimately the missing deceased male was recovered on February 10, 2024 by all appropriate and respectful means with the coordinated efforts of the respective Washington and Oregon counties initially involved. Please enact HB 2668, as this bill will not cure all ills with the respect to this issue under discussion, the bill however will certainly put in place the ability of local authorities the ability to mitigate some of the harm brought about by the actors that seek self benefit from the loss of others. Thank you for your consideration.