

Alachua County Florida

A Proclamation

Declaring May 25th, 2024, as “Family Abduction Awareness Day” in Alachua County, Florida

- Whereas,* family abduction affects countless families across the nation, often resulting in emotional and psychological trauma to the child and left-behind family; and
- Whereas,* the month of May provides an excellent opportunity to demonstrate support for national efforts to reduce the threat of family abductions, reunite the children who are missing with their families, and honor all those who are working for the cause; and
- Whereas,* a family abduction occurs when a child is taken, wrongfully retained, or concealed by a parent or other family member depriving another individual of their right to custody or visitation, even in cases with vague or absent court orders; and
- Whereas,* a family abduction is often an act of frustration by the perpetrator with the left-behind parent, the legal system, or his or her own situation in life; and
- Whereas,* as Alachua County strives to remain vigilant and informed about the dangers that face children within our communities, it is critical to recognize that family abduction is a serious crime in all 50 states – not only a civil matter; and
- Whereas,* law enforcement officers should recognize these events not as harmless offenses, but instead as an insidious form of child abuse; and
- Whereas,* it is incumbent on law enforcement agencies to maintain written plans which specify actions and procedures for promptly meeting situations of alleged family abduction; and
- Whereas,* courts have held that law enforcement is responsible for making certain that the child is with the person who has lawful custody and must verify the validity of any court orders, and when an agency fails to identify a need for training and to set policy for matters which are foreseeable, it creates a threat to public health.

Now, therefore, through the authority vested in me by the Board of County Commissioners of Alachua County, Florida, I do hereby proclaim May 25th, 2024, as “Family Abduction Awareness Day” in Alachua County, Florida.

Duly proclaimed this 25th day of May, A.D., 2024.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OF ALACHUA COUNTY FLORIDA

By: _____
Mary C. Alford, Chair

ATTEST:

J.K. “Jess” Irby, Esq.