

AG Fitch and HHS Launch Pilot Operation to Recover Missing Foster Children



We are proud to have helped kick off this program here in Mississippi. Over the past several weeks of planning and in the execution of the operation last week, it was always our intention not only to locate vulnerable Mississippi youth but also to create a model that can be used in other states. There are children all across this country who live without hope, but through partnerships like this we can show them that we care, that they matter, and that they deserve hope.

Lynn Fitch

(Jackson, Mississippi) Today, Attorney General Lynn Fitch, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) Administration for Children and Families Assistant Secretary Alex Adams, HHS Inspector General T. March Bell, and Commissioner of Child Protection Services Andrea Sanders announced the launch of Operation Hope, a new, multidisciplinary effort to locate missing foster children. Thirteen children were located, offered support services, and brought to safety.

"We are proud to have helped kick off this program here in Mississippi. Over the past several weeks of planning and in the execution of the operation last week, it was always our intention not only to locate vulnerable Mississippi youth but also to create a model that can be used in other states," **said Attorney General Lynn Fitch**. "There are children all across this country who live without hope, but through partnerships like this we can show them that we care, that they matter, and that they deserve hope."

"Delivering on the promise of A Home for Every Child means leaving no child behind," **said Alex J. Adams, Assistant Secretary at the Administration for Children and Families**. "The Trump administration is proud of our early success working with Attorney General Fitch on this special, first-of-its-kind operation, where we recovered 87 percent of missing foster youth in under 48 hours. To continue serving the best interests of children, Operation Hope will be replicated in other states, and we will leave no stone unturned when searching for these kids."

"Operation Hope underscores a core commitment of my office: missing foster children must be protected and brought to safety. Their disappearance demands a rapid, multi-faceted law-enforcement response," **said HHS Inspector General T. March Bell**. "The progress in Mississippi demonstrates what unified action can achieve, and it should serve as a model in other states. We owe every missing foster child the same decisive, coordinated effort—because their safety depends on it."

"When we began planning Operation Hope, every conversation centered around one goal: finding vulnerable children and making sure they knew someone was looking for them. Every child located through this operation represents a young person who matters deeply and deserves safety, support, and hope for the future. I am proud that MDCPS was part of this effort alongside the Attorney General's Office, the Administration for Children and Families, and our many law enforcement and

community partners. Together, we were able to not only bring children to safety but also connect them with the care and services they need moving forward," **said Andrea Sanders, Commissioner, Mississippi Department of Child Protection Services.**

During the first Trump Administration, HHS first implemented Project Hope in Kansas and Missouri, locating a total of 42 missing youth. Now in his second term, President Trump is relaunching it as Operation Hope, choosing Mississippi as the first state to implement a trauma-informed, law enforcement-led operation to locate and recover missing youth before predators do.

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