

From: [Peel, Jackson](#)
To: [Press](#)
Subject: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Representative Matt Willhite Joins Senator Ed Hooper by Filing Pool Safety Legislation
Date: Wednesday, February 3, 2021 8:32:09 AM

For Immediate Release

February 3, 2021

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Representative Matt Willhite Joins Senator Ed Hooper by Filing Pool Safety Legislation

Tallahassee, FL – This week **Representative Willhite (D-Wellington)** filed [HB 703](#), joining **Senator Ed Hooper (R- Palm Harbor)** who filed **Kacen’s Act**, named after **Kacen Howard** who drowned in his family’s pool just before his third birthday. If passed, this bill will enhance pool safety by requiring pools to have a least two of the state’s listed safety measures in place. Requiring that at least two of the state’s five listed safety measures in place, guarantee that if one safety precaution fails, another will prevent a tragic accident from occurring.

After filing **Kacen’s Act**, **Representative Willhite**, an active duty firefighter, issued the following statement:

“To all parents, including myself, the thought of losing a child is our worst nightmare. Yet, because of my job as a firefighter, I have bore direct witness to this pain. No parent should ever have to lose a child. If there are any steps we can take to protect our children and make sure no parent has to lose a child because of a preventable accident, it is our responsibility to take those steps. I’m proud to work alongside **Senator Hooper** on this life-saving legislation.”

According to the Florida Department of Health, Florida leads the country in drowning deaths of children ages 1-4 years old. Florida had the highest unintentional drowning rate in the nation in 2013 for children ages 1-4 years old with a drowning rate of 7.54 deaths per 100,000 people.

“I am proud to continue to fight for the safety of Florida’s children and sponsor The Kacen’s Cause Act for the 2021 legislative session. This legislation is important to me as drowning is the leading cause of death for children ages one to four” Said **Senator Ed Hooper**. “It can take only seconds for a child to get into a pool and suffer extreme injury or death. I am honored to be joined by my friend **Representative Matt Willhite** in the effort to add an additional safety measure to swimming pools to help prevent child drownings.”

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