

110TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 5898

To authorize a grant program to help establish and improve State-administered notification systems to help locate missing individuals with Alzheimer's disease and other dementia-related illnesses, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APRIL 24, 2008

Mr. BILIRAKIS introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

A BILL

To authorize a grant program to help establish and improve State-administered notification systems to help locate missing individuals with Alzheimer's disease and other dementia-related illnesses, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the "Silver Alert Grant Pro-
5 gram Act of 2008".

6 **SEC. 2. PURPOSES.**

7 The purposes of this Act are to—

1 (1) create a grant program to encourage the es-
2 tablishment and improvement of State-administered
3 notification systems to help find missing seniors and
4 other individuals with Alzheimer’s disease and other
5 dementia-related illnesses before the missing seniors
6 and other individuals harm themselves or others;

7 (2) promote best practices, based on the experi-
8 ences of existing Silver Alert systems, to guide the
9 establishment of new Silver Alert systems and the
10 improvement of existing Silver Alert systems; and

11 (3) increase awareness about the need for co-
12 ordinated efforts between families, caregivers, local
13 communities, and law enforcement authorities to
14 help locate missing individuals as quickly as possible
15 to increase the chances of safely reuniting the indi-
16 viduals with their families.

17 **SEC. 3. FINDINGS; SENSE OF CONGRESS.**

18 (a) FINDINGS.—The Congress finds as follows:

19 (1) According to the National Institute on
20 Aging at the National Institutes of Health, as many
21 as 5,000,000 people in the United States may suffer
22 from Alzheimer’s disease.

23 (2) The National Institute on Aging reports
24 that, although Alzheimer’s disease usually impacts
25 people age 60 and older, younger people can also be

1 affected, and the risk of developing Alzheimer’s dis-
2 ease increases with age.

3 (3) An analysis of data on Alzheimer’s disease
4 in the United States shows that 1 in 8 people over
5 the age of 65 have Alzheimer’s disease, and that
6 every 71 seconds another individual in the United
7 States develops the disease.

8 (4) The aging of the members of the baby
9 boomer generation will increase the number of peo-
10 ple suffering from Alzheimer’s disease and other de-
11 mentia-related illnesses in the coming years.

12 (5) The Alzheimer’s Association estimates that
13 more than 60 percent of people suffering from Alz-
14 heimer’s disease will wander away from their homes
15 or care-giving facilities during their lifetimes.

16 (6) Alzheimer’s disease and other dementia-re-
17 lated illnesses leave their victims confused, dis-
18 oriented, and often unable return to their to homes,
19 families, or care-giving facilities.

20 (7) States such as Colorado, Illinois, Michigan,
21 North Carolina, and Texas have established State-
22 administered notification systems, modeled after the
23 highly successful Amber Alert system, to help dis-
24 seminate relevant information about missing seniors
25 and those with other dementia-related illnesses to

1 law enforcement and other appropriate authorities in
2 an expeditious manner. The experiences of these
3 States have shown that the timely notification and
4 dissemination of appropriate information about
5 missing individuals greatly increases the chances of
6 that the individuals will be located.

7 (8) Other States have explored the development
8 of such systems but have faced difficulty creating
9 and implementing such systems due to budget con-
10 straints.

11 (b) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Con-
12 gress that—

13 (1) Silver Alert systems—

14 (A) should include definitive criteria for
15 issuing Silver Alerts to ensure that the impact
16 of such Alerts is not lessened by overly frequent
17 notifications;

18 (B) should not permit a determination of
19 whether to issue a Silver Alert to be based sole-
20 ly on the age of the missing individual;

21 (C) should only be used to issue Silver
22 Alerts with respect to individuals who are in-
23 capable of making personal care decisions or
24 managing their own personal affairs;

25 (D) should only be initiated by a person—

1 (i) who has had recent contact with
2 the missing individual with respect to
3 whom a Silver Alert may be issued; and

4 (ii) who is a legal guardian, a close
5 family member, a resident of the same
6 household, or a caregiver of the missing in-
7 dividual;

8 (E) should protect the privacy, dignity,
9 independence, and autonomy of the individuals
10 with respect to whom Silver Alerts are issued;

11 (F) should encourage the training of law
12 enforcement officers and other first responders
13 about the most appropriate methods of locating
14 missing individuals with Alzheimer's disease
15 and other dementia-related illnesses, deter-
16 mining whether an individual suffers from a de-
17 mentia-related illness, and the most effective
18 way to communicate with such an individual;
19 and

20 (G) should encourage coordination between
21 appropriate State officials administering such
22 systems and local entities administering pro-
23 grams under the Missing Alzheimer's Disease
24 Patient Alert Program; and

1 (2) the Federal Government can play an impor-
2 tant role in preventing injuries and loss of life
3 among those with Alzheimer’s disease and other de-
4 mentia-related illnesses by helping States defray the
5 costs of establishing, implementing, and improving
6 Silver Alert systems.

7 **SEC. 4. SILVER ALERT SYSTEM GRANT PROGRAM.**

8 (a) GRANT PROGRAM AUTHORIZED.—The Attorney
9 General is authorized to award grants to States to—

10 (1) establish and implement a Silver Alert sys-
11 tem; or

12 (2) make improvements to an existing Silver
13 Alert system.

14 (b) GRANT PERIOD; MINIMUM AWARD.—

15 (1) GRANT PERIOD.—Each grant under this
16 section shall be awarded for a one-year period, and
17 may be renewed for additional one-year periods as
18 the Attorney General determines to be appropriate.

19 (2) MINIMUM AWARD.—Each grant awarded to
20 a State under this section shall be for an amount
21 that is not less than \$100,000.

22 (c) REGULATIONS.—Not later than one year after the
23 date of the enactment of this Act, the Attorney General
24 shall prescribe such regulations as may be necessary to
25 carry out this section, including—

1 (1) eligibility and application criteria for States
2 desiring to receive a grant under this section; and

3 (2) selection criteria to be used by the Attorney
4 General to select the States that will receive a grant
5 under this section.

6 (d) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
7 are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section
8 \$5,600,000 for each of the fiscal years 2009 through
9 2013.

10 **SEC. 5. ANNUAL REPORT ON SILVER ALERT SYSTEMS.**

11 Not later than one year after the date of enactment
12 of this Act, and annually thereafter, the Attorney General
13 shall prepare and make available to the House of Rep-
14 resentatives and the Senate a report related to Silver Alert
15 systems, which shall include—

16 (1) a list of States that have established Silver
17 Alert systems;

18 (2) for each State that has established such a
19 system—

20 (A) the number of Silver Alerts issued;

21 (B) the number of individuals located suc-
22 cessfully;

23 (C) the average period of time between the
24 issuance of a Silver Alert and the location of
25 the individual for whom such Alert was issued;

1 (D) the State agency or authority issuing
2 Silver Alerts, and the process by which Silver
3 Alerts are disseminated;

4 (E) the cost of establishing and operating
5 such a system;

6 (F) the criteria used by the State to deter-
7 mine whether to issue a Silver Alert; and

8 (G) the extent to which missing individuals
9 for whom Silver Alerts were issued crossed
10 State lines;

11 (3) actions States have taken to protect the pri-
12 vacy and dignity of the individuals for whom Silver
13 Alerts are issued;

14 (4) ways that States have facilitated and im-
15 proved communication about missing individuals be-
16 tween families, caregivers, law enforcement officials,
17 and other authorities; and

18 (5) any other information the Attorney General
19 determines to be appropriate.

20 **SEC. 6. DEFINITIONS.**

21 For the purposes of this Act:

22 (1) **SILVER ALERT SYSTEM.**—The term “Silver
23 Alert system” means a State-administered notifica-
24 tion system to help locate missing individuals with

1 Alzheimer's disease and other dementia-related ill-
2 nesses.

3 (2) STATE.—The term State means each of the
4 several States of the United States, the District of
5 Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico,
6 Guam, the United States Virgin Islands, American
7 Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern
8 Mariana Islands.

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