

107TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 2896

AN ACT

To enhance the operation of the AMBER Alert communications network in order to facilitate the recovery of abducted children, to provide for enhanced notification on highways of alerts and information on such children, 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 “National AMBER
5 Alert Network Act of 2002”.

1 **SEC. 2. NATIONAL COORDINATION OF AMBER ALERT COM-**
 2 **MUNICATIONS NETWORK.**

3 (a) COORDINATION WITHIN DEPARTMENT OF JUS-
 4 TICE.—The Attorney General shall assign an officer of the
 5 Department of Justice to act as the national coordinator
 6 of the AMBER Alert communications network regarding
 7 abducted children. The officer so designated shall be
 8 known as the AMBER Alert Coordinator of the Depart-
 9 ment of Justice.

10 (b) DUTIES.—In acting as the national coordinator
 11 of the AMBER Alert communications network, the Coor-
 12 dinator shall—

13 (1) seek to eliminate gaps in the network, in-
 14 cluding gaps in areas of interstate travel;

15 (2) work with States to encourage the develop-
 16 ment of additional elements (known as local
 17 AMBER plans) in the network;

18 (3) work with States to ensure appropriate re-
 19 gional coordination of various elements of the net-
 20 work; and

21 (4) act as the nationwide point of contact for—

22 (A) the development of the network; and

23 (B) regional coordination of alerts on ab-
 24 ducted children through the network.

25 (c) CONSULTATION AND COOPERATION.—(1) In car-
 26 rying out duties under subsection (b), the Coordinator

1 shall notify and consult with the Director of the Federal
 2 Bureau of Investigation concerning each child abduction
 3 for which an alert is issued through the AMBER Alert
 4 communications network.

5 (2) The Coordinator shall cooperate with the Sec-
 6 retary of Transportation and the Federal Communications
 7 Commission in carrying out activities under this section.

8 (3) In preparation for carrying out duties under sub-
 9 section (b), the Coordinator shall consult with the Na-
 10 tional Center for Missing and Exploited Children and
 11 other private sector entities and organizations (including
 12 non-profit organizations) having expertise in matters re-
 13 lating to such duties.

14 **SEC. 3. MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR ISSUANCE AND DIS-**
 15 **SEMINATION OF ALERTS THROUGH AMBER**
 16 **ALERT COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK.**

17 (a) ESTABLISHMENT OF MINIMUM STANDARDS.—
 18 Subject to subsection (b), the AMBER Alert Coordinator
 19 of the Department of Justice shall establish minimum
 20 standards for—

- 21 (1) the issuance of alerts through the AMBER
 22 Alert communications network; and
 23 (2) the extent of the dissemination of alerts
 24 issued through the network.

1 (b) LIMITATIONS.—(1) The minimum standards es-
 2 tablished under subsection (a) shall be adoptable on a vol-
 3 untary basis only.

4 (2) The minimum standards shall, to the maximum
 5 extent practicable (as determined by the Coordinator in
 6 consultation with State and local law enforcement agen-
 7 cies), provide that the dissemination of an alert through
 8 the AMBER Alert communications network be limited to
 9 the geographic areas most likely to facilitate the recovery
 10 of the abducted child concerned.

11 (3) In carrying out activities under subsection (a),
 12 the Coordinator may not interfere with the current system
 13 of voluntary coordination between local broadcasters and
 14 State and local law enforcement agencies for purposes of
 15 the AMBER Alert communications network.

16 (c) COOPERATION AND CONSULTATION.—(1) The
 17 Coordinator shall cooperate with the Secretary of Trans-
 18 portation and the Federal Communications Commission in
 19 carrying out activities under this section.

20 (2) The Coordinator shall also cooperate with local
 21 broadcasters and State and local law enforcement agencies
 22 in establishing minimum standards under this section.

23 (3) The Coordinator shall also consult with the Na-
 24 tional Center for Missing and Exploited Children and
 25 other private sector entities and organizations (including

1 non-profit organizations) having an expertise in matters
 2 relating to the minimum standards to be established under
 3 this section in establishing the minimum standards.

4 **SEC. 4. GRANT PROGRAM FOR NOTIFICATION AND COMMU-**
 5 **NICATIONS SYSTEMS ALONG HIGHWAYS FOR**
 6 **RECOVERY OF ABDUCTED CHILDREN.**

7 (a) PROGRAM REQUIRED.—The Secretary of Trans-
 8 portation shall carry out a program to provide grants to
 9 States for the development or enhancement of notification
 10 or communications systems along highways for alerts and
 11 other information for the recovery of abducted children.

12 (b) ACTIVITIES.—Activities funded by grants under
 13 the program under subsection (a) may include—

14 (1) the development or enhancement of elec-
 15 tronic message boards along highways and the place-
 16 ment of additional signage along highways; and

17 (2) the development or enhancement of other
 18 means of disseminating along highways alerts and
 19 other information for the recovery of abducted chil-
 20 dren.

21 (c) FEDERAL SHARE.—The Federal share of the cost
 22 of any activities funded by a grant under the program
 23 under subsection (a) may not exceed 50 percent.

24 (d) DISTRIBUTION OF GRANT AMOUNTS ON GEO-
 25 GRAPHIC BASIS.—The Secretary shall, to the maximum

1 extent practicable, ensure the distribution of grants under
 2 the program under subsection (a) on an equitable basis
 3 throughout the various regions of the United States.

4 (e) ADMINISTRATION.—The Secretary shall prescribe
 5 requirements, including application requirements, for
 6 grants under the program under subsection (a).

7 (f) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—(1)
 8 There is authorized to be appropriated for the Department
 9 of Transportation for fiscal year 2003 such sums as may
 10 be necessary to carry out this section.

11 (2) Amounts appropriated pursuant to the authoriza-
 12 tion of appropriations in paragraph (1) shall remain avail-
 13 able until expended.

14 **SEC. 5. GRANT PROGRAM FOR SUPPORT OF AMBER ALERT**
 15 **COMMUNICATIONS PLANS.**

16 (a) PROGRAM REQUIRED.—The Attorney General
 17 shall carry out a program to provide grants to States for
 18 the development or enhancement of programs and activi-
 19 ties for the support of AMBER Alert communications
 20 plans.

21 (b) ACTIVITIES.—Activities funded by grants under
 22 the program under subsection (a) may include—

23 (1) the development and implementation of edu-
 24 cation and training programs, and associated mate-

1 rials, relating to AMBER Alert communications
2 plans;

3 (2) the development and implementation of law
4 enforcement programs, and associated equipment,
5 relating to AMBER Alert communications plans;
6 and

7 (3) such other activities as the Attorney Gen-
8 eral considers appropriate for supporting the
9 AMBER Alert communications program.

10 (c) FEDERAL SHARE.—The Federal share of the cost
11 of any activities funded by a grant under the program
12 under subsection (a) may not exceed 50 percent.

13 (d) DISTRIBUTION OF GRANT AMOUNTS ON GEO-
14 GRAPHIC BASIS.—The Attorney General shall, to the max-
15 imum extent practicable, ensure the distribution of grants
16 under the program under subsection (a) on an equitable
17 basis throughout the various regions of the United States.

18 (e) ADMINISTRATION.—The Attorney General shall
19 prescribe requirements, including application require-
20 ments, for grants under the program under subsection (a).

21 (f) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—(1)
22 There is authorized to be appropriated for the Department
23 of Justice for fiscal year 2003 such sums as may be nec-
24 essary to carry out this section.

- 1 (2) Amounts appropriated pursuant to the authoriza-
2 tion of appropriations in paragraph (1) shall remain avail-
3 able until expended.

Passed the Senate September 10, 2002.

Attest:

Secretary.

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