

108TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 121

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 2003”.

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 WITH FEDERAL BUREAU OF IN-
 26 VESTIGATION.—In carrying out duties under subsection

1 (b), the Coordinator shall notify and consult with the Di-
 2 rector of the Federal Bureau of Investigation concerning
 3 each child abduction for which an alert is issued through
 4 the AMBER Alert communications network.

5 (d) COOPERATION.—The Coordinator shall cooperate
 6 with the Secretary of Transportation and the Federal
 7 Communications Commission in carrying out activities
 8 under this section.

9 **SEC. 3. MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR ISSUANCE AND DIS-**
 10 **SEMINATION OF ALERTS THROUGH AMBER**
 11 **ALERT COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK.**

12 (a) ESTABLISHMENT OF MINIMUM STANDARDS.—
 13 Subject to subsection (b), the AMBER Alert Coordinator
 14 of the Department of Justice shall establish minimum
 15 standards for—

16 (1) the issuance of alerts through the AMBER
 17 Alert communications network; and

18 (2) the extent of the dissemination of alerts
 19 issued through the network.

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

23 (2) The minimum standards shall, to the maximum
 24 extent practicable (as determined by the Coordinator in
 25 consultation with State and local law enforcement agen-

1 cies), provide that the dissemination of an alert through
 2 the AMBER Alert communications network be limited to
 3 the geographic areas most likely to facilitate the recovery
 4 of the abducted child concerned.

5 (3) In carrying out activities under subsection (a),
 6 the Coordinator may not interfere with the current system
 7 of voluntary coordination between local broadcasters and
 8 State and local law enforcement agencies for purposes of
 9 the AMBER Alert communications network.

10 (c) COOPERATION.—(1) The Coordinator shall co-
 11 operate with the Secretary of Transportation and the Fed-
 12 eral Communications Commission in carrying out activi-
 13 ties under this section.

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

17 **SEC. 4. GRANT PROGRAM FOR NOTIFICATION AND COMMU-**
 18 **NICATIONS SYSTEMS ALONG HIGHWAYS FOR**
 19 **RECOVERY OF ABDUCTED CHILDREN.**

20 (a) PROGRAM REQUIRED.—The Secretary of Trans-
 21 portation shall carry out a program to provide grants to
 22 States for the development or enhancement of notification
 23 or communications systems along highways for alerts and
 24 other information for the recovery of abducted children.

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

3 (1) the development or enhancement of elec-
4 tronic message boards along highways and the place-
5 ment of additional signage along highways; and

6 (2) the development or enhancement of other
7 means of disseminating along highways alerts and
8 other information for the recovery of abducted chil-
9 dren.

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 Secretary shall, to the maximum
15 extent practicable, ensure the distribution of grants under
16 the program under subsection (a) on an equitable basis
17 throughout the various regions of the United States.

18 (e) ADMINISTRATION.—The Secretary shall prescribe
19 requirements, including application requirements, for
20 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 Transportation \$20,000,000 for fiscal year 2004 to
24 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.

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

6 (a) PROGRAM REQUIRED.—The Attorney General
7 shall carry out a program to provide grants to States for
8 the development or enhancement of programs and activi-
9 ties for the support of AMBER Alert communications
10 plans.

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

13 (1) the development and implementation of edu-
14 cation and training programs, and associated mate-
15 rials, relating to AMBER Alert communications
16 plans;

17 (2) the development and implementation of law
18 enforcement programs, and associated equipment,
19 relating to AMBER Alert communications plans;
20 and

21 (3) such other activities as the Secretary con-
22 siders appropriate for supporting the AMBER Alert
23 communications program.

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

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

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

12 (f) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—(1)
 13 There is authorized to be appropriated for the Department
 14 of Justice \$5,000,000 for fiscal year 2004 to carry out
 15 this section.

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

Passed the Senate January 21, 2003.

Attest:

Secretary.

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