

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.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APRIL 24, 2008

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

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## 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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