

# ASSEMBLY DEMOCRATS NEWS RELEASE



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**FOR RELEASE:**

March 16, 2009

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## **NEW JERSEY CLOSER TO BECOMING 11TH STATE WITH 'SILVER ALERT' SYSTEM FOR MISSING VULNERABLE**

(TRENTON) – The Assembly today approved legislation sponsored by six Assembly Democrats to make New Jersey the 11th state with a “Silver Alert” system to notify the public about missing persons, of all ages, who are believed to be suffering from dementia or other cognitive impairments.

The plan is based on the “Amber Alert” system used by state police to locate missing children. The measure is sponsored by Assembly members Wayne DeAngelo, Sandi Love, Paul Moriarty, Pamela R. Lampitt, Cary Rodriguez and Elease Evans.

The bill now heads to the Senate for more consideration.

“Unfortunately, it’s common for an elderly loved one suffering from dementia and other ailments to wander,” said DeAngelo (D-Mercer/Middlesex). “This can be dangerous and even life-threatening for our loved ones and stressful for caregivers and family. This new system would be a common sense step toward protecting those who deserve our best, the elderly.”

According to the Alzheimer’s Association, 60 percent of those with dementia will wander at some point.

Under the legislation (A-2844), the emergency alert plan would be a voluntary, cooperative effort between state and local law enforcement agencies and the broadcast media. Upon notice by the state police, broadcast media would transmit an emergency alert to inform the public of the disappearance of an elderly person or a younger person suffering from a cognitive impairment such as autism.

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“This offers a quick way to alert the public and law enforcement about missing individuals with impairments, and time is often of the essence in these situations, so we should do anything we can to help hastily distribute information,” said Love (D- Camden/Gloucester).

According to the National Conference of State Legislatures, New Jersey would join Colorado, Georgia, Illinois, Kentucky, Michigan, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Texas and Virginia with “Silver Alert” systems.

“If other states can protect their seniors and at risk young people like this, then so should New Jersey,” said Lampitt (D-Camden).

The alerts would include a description of the person and how people with information relating to the missing person can contact law enforcement.

“Information is key in cases like this, as is time,” said Rodriguez (D-Hudson). “A simple message like this can help avoid a tragedy.”

The lawmakers said the legislation takes on even more importance as Baby Boomers age.

“Statistics show at least half of those with dementia who wander away suffer serious injury or death if not found within 24 hours,” said Moriarty (D-Gloucester/Camden). “That’s reason enough to get this into law.”

“Protecting the most vulnerable members of our society is the right thing to do, and this is a simple step that we know can work,” said Evans (D-Passaic).

The bill was passed 79-0. It now goes to the Senate for further consideration.

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