



KEN SKOWRONSKI

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First, I'd like to thank Chairman Endsley and Representatives of the Aging and Long Term Care committee for holding this hearing on AB 710 or the "Silver Alert" Bill.

This bill is designed to create a safety system for at-risk seniors. This bill is similar to the incredibly successful "Amber Alerts" that are put out when a child is believed to be abducted. In this case, a "Silver Alert" would be broadcast when an elderly at-risk individual is lost or in danger. The hope is that an alert would aid authorities in finding the lost senior as soon as possible.

According to the Alzheimer's Association, more than 60 percent of those with Alzheimer's or another form of dementia will wander, and if a person is not found within 24 hours, up to half of individuals who wander will suffer serious injury or death.¹

This important measure will save lives. There have been instances in the past in our state where this alert system could have benefited authorities in finding at-risk seniors. Racine has had two recent stories of dementia patients wandering. In October, a Racine County Sheriff

found a man wandering on the side of the road, less than a mile from his home, wearing nothing but pajamas and a jacket. In December, an 82-year-old Caledonia woman missing for more than a day was reportedly found collapsed in a grocery store in Wheaton Illinois.²

Fortunately, these stories have positive endings. Unfortunately, last year a 76-year-old dementia sufferer was found dead in Blanchardville, Wisconsin with weather being a contributing factor in her wandering death.³

With Silver Alert, serious injuries and death from wandering could be prevented. There are currently 22 states that operate a Silver Alert program and another nine that operate something similar. Other states that have currently Silver Alert has been successful in returning these at risk seniors safely.

Georgia's program has garnered safe return of 70 of the 71 calls issued between its inception in 2006 and January of 2009.⁴

In Texas, the Silver Alert system was invoked 52 times in the first year following its inception in September 2007. Of these alerts, 48 of the missing seniors were located safely, and 13 of these recoveries were directly attributable to their Silver Alert program.⁵

¹ http://www.alz.org/norcal/in_my_community_18411.asp

²² Woman found in Illinois http://journaltimes.com/news/local/crime-and-courts/woman-found-in-illinois/article_1b19ba6e-6cba-11e3-acd7-0019bb2963f4.html

³³ UPDATE: Missing Freeport Woman Found Dead in Wisconsin <http://www.wifr.com/news/headlines/Freeport-Woman-Missing-187587961.html>

⁴ System successful in finding lost adults http://chronicle.augusta.com/stories/2009/01/10/met_507153.shtml

⁵ House congressional Record September 2008. <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CREC-2008-09-15/pdf/CREC-2008-09-15-pt1-PgH8078.pdf#page=4>



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Unfortunately, stories of dementia patients wandering off are all too common, and in a state like Wisconsin, especially during a time of the year such as this, finding an at-risk senior as quickly as possible is of critical importance.

I appreciate your thoughtful consideration of this bill in an effort to keep at risk seniors safe.

My name is Claire Baeb; my husband as you know has passed.

I know my time today is short. What weighs on my mind right now is that I am so thankful for the West Bend Police Department. Their kindness and excellent care following our road trip, especially for my husband meant the world to me.

Thank you for taking the time to make the Silver Alert system so that others will not have to experience what I have gone through.

Thank you.

My name is Diane Smith; I am Claire and Leo Baeb's daughter.

Thank you for being here and pursuing Silver Alert. Had I not gone through this experience I would not have known the value that it would bring to the lives of so many lost people and their families.

My story begins a day prior to my parents getting lost. I had gotten back from an Army Reunion in Heidelberg Germany. My trip coincided with the closing of the military bases. My desire for the next day was to share with my dad how much the German people appreciated the sacrifices the American soldiers made on their behalf. My dad was proud to be a soldier, but he never found peace following WWII.

The next day my parents are missing. Sleep deprived and jet lagged, you don't want me driving the highways into the night looking for my parents. Yet, the public cries out, "What is this family doing? They're not doing enough!" What more could we have done?

Silver Alert is a Win/Win.

We know of 6 different times when people had helped Mom and Dad along the way. That is how Wisconsinites are: friendly, generous and kind. These acts of kindness do not include the truckers they may have encountered at the rest stop where they spent that first night. I am certain had the truckers known about my Mom and Dad, they would have been back in Green Bay before midnight. What an amazing resource to our Police Departments are those truckers, and the citizens of Wisconsin.

Silver Alert would build community; people helping people, and sharing their success stories with neighbors and friends.

Silver Alert would bring hope instead of heartache, and safety on our highways. When the elderly find themselves lost there is such a critical window of time. Within 28 hours the police were made aware of my parents location. A Starbucks customer found them while Mom was getting coffee for Dad. 28 hours was too late for my dad.

Silver Alert will not bring my dad back, but it would have given us more time with him before he died early on Father's Day morning. Not one of us had a chance to say goodbye.

Silver Alert would honor my Dad's memory and bring a peace; peace in knowing that lives would be saved, rather than lost.

Thank you all for allowing us to come and share our recent experiences, and also our love for our parents. Our concern is for all who have been lost, and will continue to be lost, on the Wisconsin highways.

My job here today :) is to talk about my parents.

As you or may not know, my father passed away shortly after my parents went missing in June of 2013. Their total time, from home to home, was 36 hours. They were missing in plain sight. It was a painful time, and I won't go into how horrible those two days were. We have been living a surreal existence as we struggle with the grief of losing our father, and nearly losing our mother.

My mother is a strong and brave woman, and she is here today. Being here today is no different than how she has lived her entire life--in service of others. It is difficult, but we are all trying to find meaning in our sorrow. We call her Mrs. Silver Alert. :)

My grandparents were first generation Americans--they really came on a boat. With six children they weathered the Great Depression, and this is where my father, later a soldier, honed his sharp shooting skills. The family needed to eat and my father would hunt. My grandfather would give him 20 shells and he was expected to bring back at least 18 squirrels, rabbits or birds. He never raised a rifle to his shoulder, he shot from the hip.

He joined the army, and he served in WWII in the Battle of the Bulge. During that time not everyone was a volunteer and he was very proud of stepping up. He wanted his volunteer number to be put on his gravestone, but they don't allow that any more due to privacy issues. Sgt. Baeb 161 296 12. lol Just in case he can hear. He knew what it truly meant to be an American. He put it all on the line.

My father was a hero. He was a lead machine gunner, and no one on his team died on his watch. The Battle of the Bulge was especially traumatic. For my dad, who worshiped Wisconsin, the beauty of the winter snow was often marred by the memories of soldiers blood that covered and soaked through the snow in the winter of 1944-1945. He carried soldiers frozen bodies across fields and over hills. General Patton insisted they visit the concentration camps as they were being evacuated. He wanted them to see the true horror of the Hitler regime. And they did. As a result from the war, my dad suffered from post traumatic stress disorder.

My mom, a retired nursing supervisor at St. Mary's Hospital in Green Bay, is the unsung hero.

For 43 years she worked as a nurse when having a working mother was a rarity. She completed her bachelor's degree when we were in elementary school. All five of us went to private school, and also had music lessons. They were hardworking and frugal. They got the job done.

My father is gone. He would just be shocked and amazed to see us here talking about him. He was smart, a history buff, and he could really knock out a crossword puzzle. He was hilarious--and vain. Horribly vain. His catch phrase, which was really funny, was that he was "handsome as hell". We loved him, just as he was. We are grateful that his illness was brief and his physical sufferings are no more.

My mom is the one who is suffering during this time. The stress and strain of comprehending what happened on the day of their drive haunts her, every day and every night. The grief of early Alzheimers, loss of her drivers license, no longer living in her own home, and the death of my father. They would have been married 60 years this November. Since that day she has been hospitalized several times, and in fact has just recovered from pneumonia.

How much can one person handle?

We believe that if Silver Alert had been in place in June, my father would still be here and enjoying this beautiful snowy day.

I also believe that if Silver Alert had been in place, my mother would not be struggling with such illness and grief. The police that eventually found them were kind, gentle and loving. They wanted to find them--they just needed permission.

We hope that our sharing today will help prevent more tragedies like the one that our family is currently walking through.

Thank you.



February 5, 2014

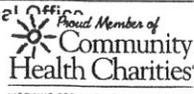
Assembly Committee on Aging and Long Term Care--AB 710

Rob Gundermann, Public Policy Director Alzheimer's and Dementia Alliance of Wisconsin.

Good afternoon,

I thank you for holding this hearing today on an important issue that has the potential to impact all of us. There are a number of reasons why we are dealing with an increased number of people with dementia becoming lost. One reason is that Wisconsin is growing older. DHS was kind enough to provide some maps that show how our population will age in the coming decades and I've attached those to my testimony. Another reason is that modern medicine is prolonging our lives and the most common form of dementia, Alzheimer's disease, is largely a disease of age. The longer you live the greater the likelihood of developing Alzheimer's disease. In fact almost half of those 85 years and older have Alzheimer's type dementia. As our population lives longer we will see more people living with Alzheimer's. Unfortunately, while we have made great strides in prolonging life, we haven't developed any new medications to treat Alzheimer's disease in over a decade and we have no medications that will prevent or even delay the progression of the disease. At this point in time all we can do is address symptoms. Wisconsin, like many states, has also expanded the length of time between license renewals to eight years. Coincidentally eight years is the average length of time an individual lives with Alzheimer's. Lastly, we have in some respects become a victim of our own success in that Wisconsin does a very good job of allowing people with Alzheimer's disease to remain in their homes for as long as possible. This is a win-win situation as the vast majority of people with dementia want to live at home and at the same time we save an enormous amount of money in our Medicaid budget by preventing needless institutionalizations but the net result of all these factors is that we have more older people with dementia on the road and the numbers will only increase with time.

Inevitably we will have people with dementia on occasion become lost. The bill before you today addresses this issue. It provides a better mechanism for dealing with these situations. Statistically if we don't find the person within 24 hours the probability of a positive outcome drops to single digits. Essentially we are in a race against dehydration and exposure as those are the two factors that most often cause negative outcomes. In Wisconsin where we experience severe weather the time frame is often less than 24 hours. Assembly Bill 710 will help address these situations quickly by getting the word out far and wide.

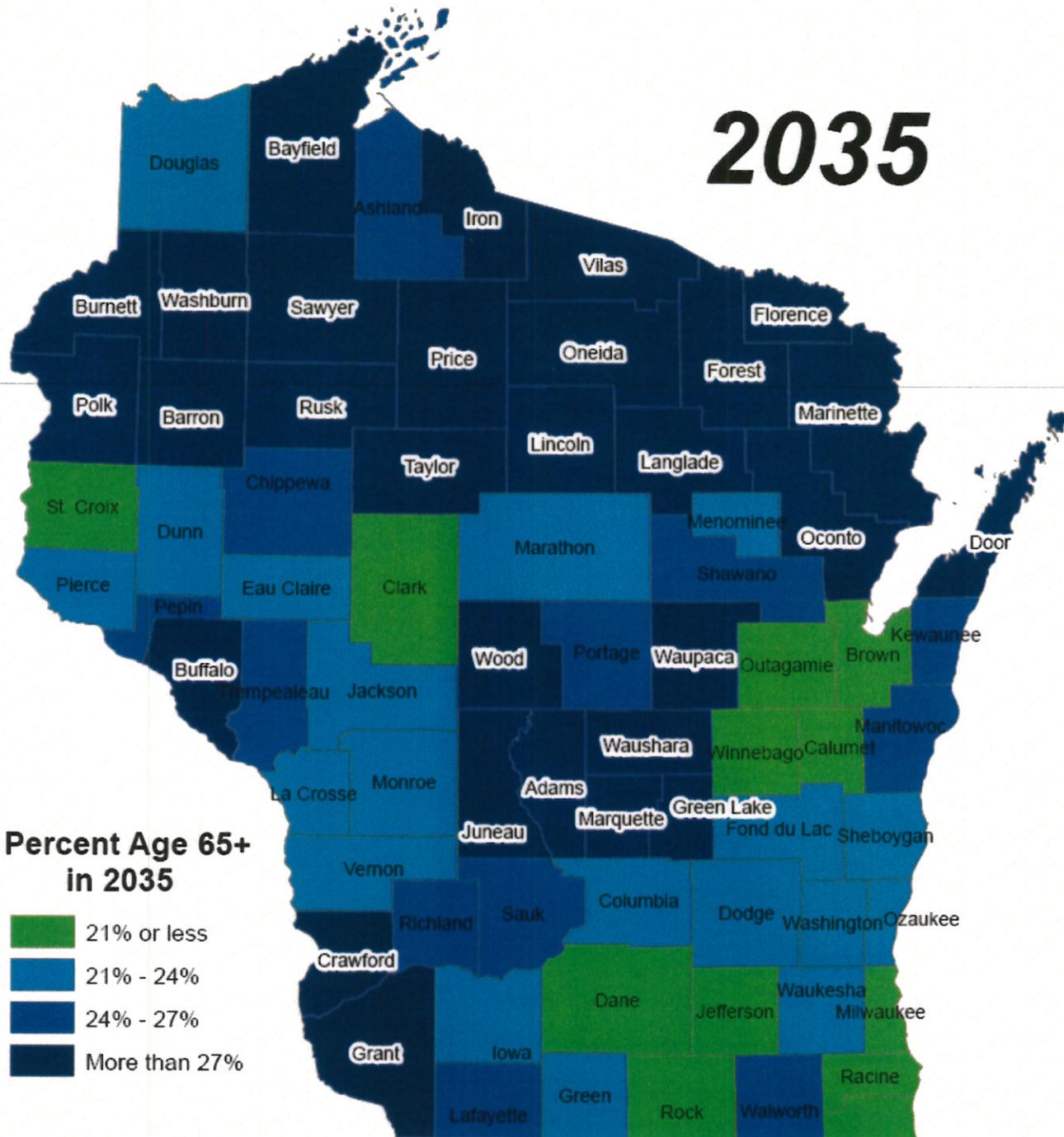
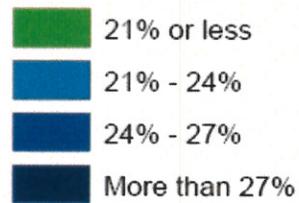
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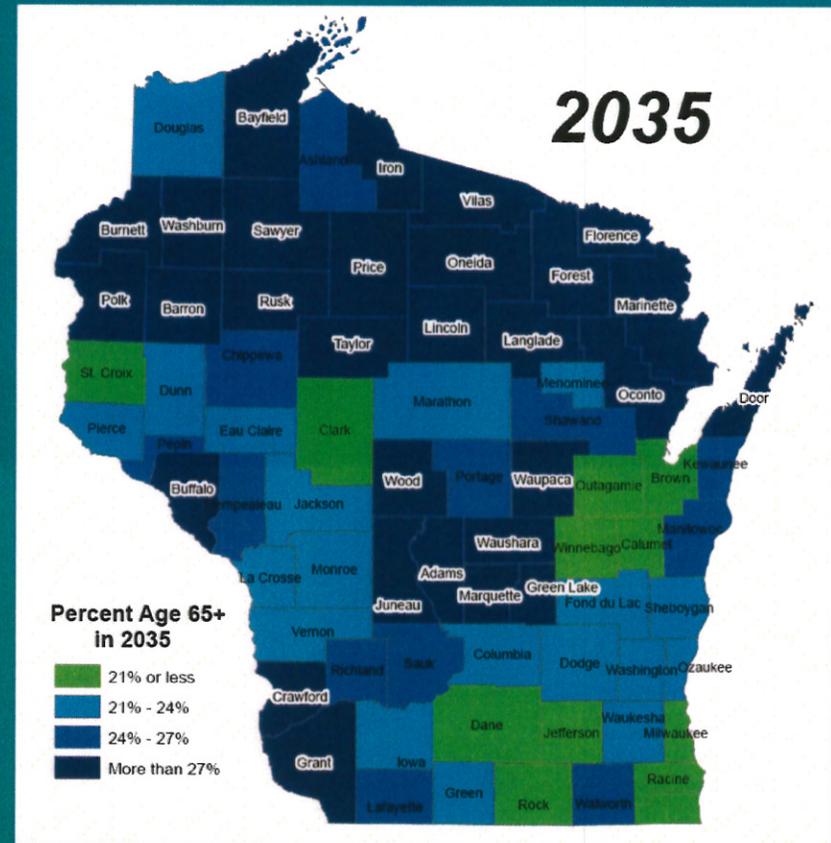
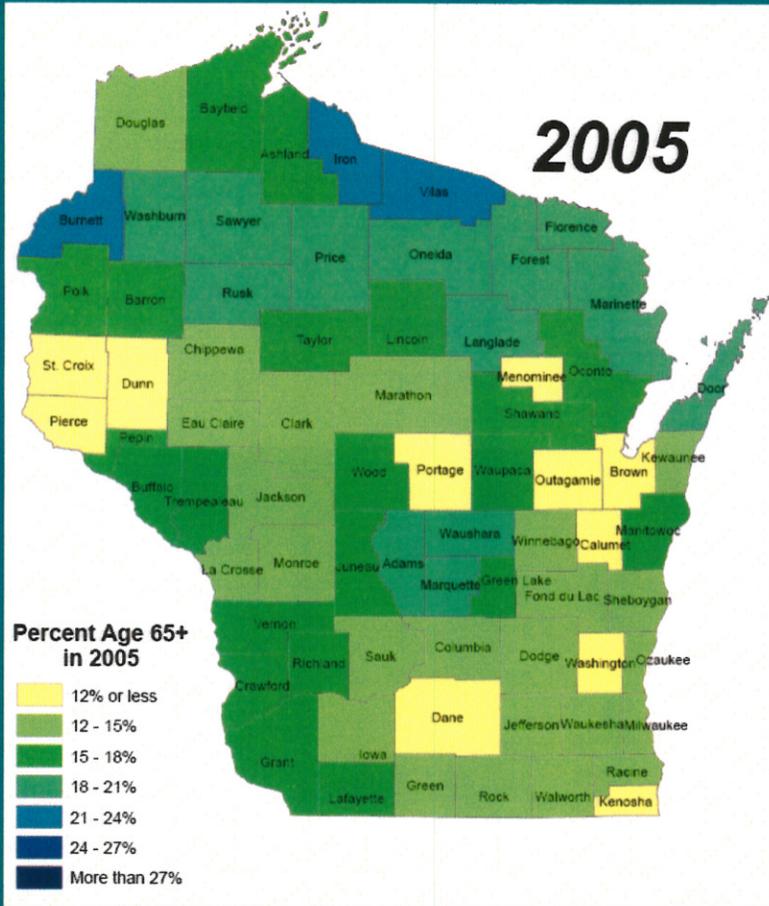
In closing I would just like to mention something a police officer from Ashwaubenon said to me several years ago. He said that every time he has responded to a report of someone driving the wrong way on the interstate the person was either intoxicated or had dementia. Driving the wrong way or forgetting what a stop sign or a stop light means are typical mistakes someone with dementia makes when they get confused. When a person with dementia is driving and gets lost and confused it's in everyone's best interest to find them quickly. This bill will not only help people with dementia to get home safely, it will help everyone sharing the roads with them get home safely too.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I'm happy to try to answer any questions.

2035

Percent Age 65+ in 2035







STATE OF WISCONSIN
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Heather A. Bruemmer

4 Feb 2014

Representative Mike Endsley, Chair;
Assembly Committee on Aging and Long Term Care
219 N State Capitol
Madison, WI 53708

Dear Rep. Endsley,

The Board on Aging and Long Term Care wishes to express our wholehearted support for AB 710 and the pending amendment, the extension of the integrated crime alert network to include public notification of missing adults over the age of 65 years. This "Silver Alert" process would address an increasingly urgent need for protection of our seniors.

This agency has heard of situations where seniors have been removed from their placement without the knowledge or consent of the court-appointed guardian and taken to another state. Having the ability to alert the proper authorities and the civilian population through a system such as is defined in this bill may have made a difference in shortening the time it takes to return the victim safely to her or his residence. This may also mean that necessary care and treatment whether it is protection from the elements, availability of proper nutrition, needed medication and other medical care will not be delayed. The integrated crime alert network has proven itself effective in the past and we fully expect that these results will carry over as the system expands to include Wisconsin's elders.

We have only one suggestion for a possible edit to AB 710. We would, in Section 5 (and throughout the bill), ask that the defined age of an "adult at risk" be lowered to 60. This would be in line with the age at which a person is eligible to be a client of the Board on Aging and Long Term Care as well as being sensitive to the fact that many people are now experiencing dementia at an earlier age.

The Board on Aging and Long Term Care thanks all of the co-sponsors of AB 710 and the pending amendment for their efforts to shore up the protections that Wisconsin offers to our vulnerable adults.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Heather A. Bruemmer".

Heather A. Bruemmer
Executive Director



February 4, 2014

Representative Mike Endsley, Chair
Assembly Committee on Aging and Long Term Care
219 N State Capitol
Madison, WI 53708

RE: AB 710 – relating to alerts for missing adults at risk and making an appropriation

Dear Rep. Endsley,

The Greater Wisconsin Agency on Aging Resources (GWAAR), Inc. wishes to register support for AB 710 and the pending amendment which would require the Department of Justice (DOJ) to allow law enforcement agencies to use the integrated crime alert network to disseminate reports of missing older adults with cognitive impairments.

We would suggest one edit be made to AB 710. GWAAR is a non-profit agency committed to supporting the successful delivery of aging programs and services in 70 counties and 11 tribes. These programs primarily serve adults age 60 and older. Given our target population, that for most people with Alzheimer's disease symptoms first appear after age 60 and that 4% experience even earlier onset of the disease, we would suggest in Section 5 (and throughout the bill), that the defined age of an "adult at risk" be lowered to age 60.

Over 30 states have already established Silver Alert or similar programs to help find missing seniors. Older people are the fastest growing demographic group in Wisconsin, increasing 11% since 2000. By 2030, the older population is expected to reach more than 1.3 million. As the population ages, the prevalence of chronic conditions also increases. Of these, Alzheimer's disease and other dementias are among the most rapidly increasing. According to a recent report released by the Alzheimer's Association, Wisconsin had over 110,000 residents over age 65 diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease. At some point, 6 in 10 people with Alzheimer's disease will wander. For an individual living with Alzheimer's disease, it is possible to become disoriented and lost even in his or her own neighborhood or other previously familiar place. Unfortunately, up to half of those not found within a 24 hour period, will suffer serious injury or even death.

As a former administrator of an adult day center and an early memory loss program, as well as a past caregiver support group facilitator, I have learned firsthand there is always a "first" time. No one knows for sure when someone might begin to wander or become confused and get lost. Programs such as Safe Return and Project Lifesaver are wonderful programs for helping to locate missing older people with known dementia disorders. Unfortunately, all potential wanderers have not yet been identified and registered and for those who have registered, the more help the better. Quickly alerting law enforcement and the public of a missing older adult increases the chances of finding that person and returning them unharmed and could save a life.

We are thankful to all of the co-sponsors of AB 710 and the pending amendment for their efforts to further protect Wisconsin's vulnerable older adult population.

Sincerely,

Janet L. Zander

Advocacy & Public Policy Coordinator

cc: Rep. Czaja, Rep. Williams, Rep. Bernier, Rep. Petryk, Rep. Nerison, Rep. Bernard Schaber, Rep. Sargent, Rep. Kahl, Rep. Skowronski, Rep. Weininger, Rep. Kaufert



February 4, 2014

Representative Ken Skowronski
Wisconsin State Assembly

Re: Support of LRB 3058, relating to the alert for missing adults at risk, "Silver Alert"

Dear Representative Skowronski,

The Alzheimer's Association Wisconsin Chapter Network is in support of LRB 3058, relating to the alert for missing adults at risk, "Silver Alert." Today, over 5 million Americans are living with Alzheimer's disease. Of Americans aged 65 and over, 1 in 9 has Alzheimer's and 1 in 3 people aged 85 and older has the disease. More than 15 million Americans now care for an individual with Alzheimer's or dementia. Currently, there are more than 110,000 persons diagnosed with Alzheimer's living in Wisconsin. As the baby boomer generation reaches age 65 and beyond, the number of persons diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease will increase 30% by 2025. Age is the greatest risk factor for this disease. It will have a tremendous impact on our communities as we try to address the care needs of those persons diagnosed with dementia and as we try to address the needs of the family caregiver.

One of the most disheartening symptoms of the disease is loss of memory of familiar people and places. Six in 10 people with dementia will wander. A person with Alzheimer's may not remember his or her name or address, and can become disoriented, even in familiar places. Wandering among people with dementia is dangerous, but there are strategies and services to help prevent it. We believe the proposed legislation will help reduce the tragic consequences of someone with Alzheimer's or a related dementia wandering and losing their way home.

Currently, in Wisconsin, we have an AMBER Alert system. Although Silver Alert and AMBER Alert have the same goal – the safe return of individuals to their homes and families, distinct differences exist between the two programs.

AMBER Alert	Silver Alert
<p>AMBER Alert is a well-established federally funded program developed for missing or potentially abducted children.</p>	<p>Silver Alerts are new state programs that assist vulnerable adults who have wandered.</p>
<p>AMBER Alert involves searching for a minor who has not simply wandered off, but has been taken, so the program utilizes immediate and far reaching amplified search techniques.</p>	<p>Most people with Alzheimer's disease who wander are found less than 1.5 miles from home, so the search techniques are typically very different from the techniques used with AMBER Alert. Statewide alerts, such as highway signs notifying the public</p>

<p>Before an AMBER Alert is issued, three criteria must be met:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Law enforcement confirms a child has been abducted. • Law enforcement believes the circumstances surrounding the child's disappearance indicate the child is in danger of serious bodily harm or death. • There is enough descriptive information about the child or abductor or abductor's vehicle for law enforcement to believe an immediate broadcast alert will help. <p>These strict criteria ensure AMBER Alert issuance is rare, generating effective public attention and response when issued.</p>	<p>and media, are not always the most effective way to find an adult wanderer.</p> <p>Many persons with Alzheimer's disease who wander do so repeatedly, and as more people develop Alzheimer's disease, a corresponding increase in wandering incidents will occur. Alerting the media and the public every time an adult wanders would desensitize the public to the issue of wandering, rendering the alert system ineffective, and potentially creating further danger for the person who has wandered.</p>
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Silver Alerts can also enhance existing successful programs, such as Medic Alert® + Safe Return®. The Alzheimer's Association's Safe Return® program began in 1993 as a nationwide identification, support and enrollment program which provided assistance when a person with Alzheimer's or a related dementia wandered (either locally or far from home).

We encourage the legislature to pass "Silver Alert" legislation helping thousands of people throughout Wisconsin to reconnect safely with their loved ones who have become lost while wandering. If you would like to add us as sponsoring organizations to the bill, please feel free.

Sincerely,



Kim Kinner
 Executive Director
 Alzheimer's Association Greater Wisconsin Chapter
 2900 Curry Lane, Ste. A
 Green Bay, WI 54311
 (920) 469-2110

cc: Tom Hlavacek, Alzheimer's Association Southeast Chapter
 Kari Paterson, Alzheimer's Association Southcentral Chapter