

## S. 1263, the National Silver Alert Act of 2011

### Background and Bill Summary

Each year, thousands of older adults in the United States go missing as a result of foul play, or conditions such as dementia or Alzheimer's disease. Such conditions often have the effect of leaving victims disoriented and confused. S. 1263:

- **Establishes a national communications network directs to assist efforts to locate missing senior citizens.** This network would be created by the Department of Justice and this bill authorizes such sums to carry out the network.
- **Improves coordination with state efforts,** by creating a national Coordinator for the network to work with States to develop local Silver Alert plans and establish voluntary guidelines. The Coordinator must consult with various entities including the Federal Communications Commission, and State and local law enforcement. Additionally, the Coordinator must report to Congress annually on the status and effectiveness of State Silver Alert plans.
- **Creates the Silver Alert Program,** by authorizing the appropriation of \$10 million annually over the 2009-2013 period for DOJ to make grants to states for activities to support the network, to be known as the Silver Alert program.
- **Competitive grants for missing adult programs.** The bill reauthorizes a program where the Attorney General may make competitive grants to organizations for the purpose of maintaining a national, interconnected resource center and clearinghouse for missing adults (also know as Kristen's Act). Grants may also be used to train agencies and organizations, provide assistance to families, and assist in public notification efforts. The Attorney General must also coordinate federally funded programs and encourage coordination between State and local law enforcement, public agencies, and nonprofits which receive grants. \$4 million is authorized for each year over the 2010-2020 period for this purpose.

### Status

S 1263, the National Silver Alert Act of 2011 was introduced in the United States Senate by Senator Herb Kohl [WI] on June 23, 2011. After introduction, S 1263 was referred to the Senate Committee on the Judiciary.

There are currently [5 Cosponsors](#).

### **Rationale/Talking Points**

- Modeled after the Amber Alert, the Silver Alert is an emergency system in which law enforcement can broadcast regional or statewide alerts for missing seniors and/or other adults with Alzheimer's or other cognitive disorders.
- It is estimated that over five million Americans suffer from Alzheimer's, and sixty percent of these persons are likely to wander from their homes. Fifty percent of such wanderers risk illness, injury, or death if not located within 24 hours.
- Currently, at least eight states including Texas, Michigan, Illinois, and California have developed programs and laws to locate missing adults.