

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5602

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As of January 27, 2014

**Title:** An act relating to creating a silver alert system.

**Brief Description:** Creating a silver alert system.

**Sponsors:** Senators Bailey, Keiser, Kohl-Welles, Schlicher and Kline.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Health Care: 1/27/14.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE

**Staff:** Kathleen Buchli (786-7488)

**Background:** The Washington State Patrol (WSP) must implement a plan for voluntary cooperation between local, state, tribal, and other law enforcement agencies, state government agencies, radio and television stations, cable and satellite systems, and social media pages and sites to enhance the public's ability to assist in recovering missing children and missing endangered persons. This plan is commonly known as an Amber Alert plan or an Endangered Missing Person Advisory plan.

A missing endangered person is a person who has a developmental disability or is a vulnerable adult believed to be in danger because of age, health, mental or physical disability, in combination with environmental or weather conditions; or is believed to be unable to return to safety without assistance.

**Summary of Bill:** WSP must develop and implement a Silver Alert plan for voluntary cooperation between local, state, tribal, and other law enforcement agencies, state government agencies, radio and television stations, and cable and satellite systems to enhance the public's ability to assist in recovering senior citizens age 65 or older who have a diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease, dementia, or other mental disability. A Silver Alert may be requested if the missing senior citizen suffers from a mental impairment, verified by written documentation; the request is made within 72 hours of the person's disappearance; the disappearance poses a credible threat to the person's health and safety; there is sufficient information to provide the public to assist in locating the person; and a law enforcement investigation has ruled out alternative explanations for the disappearance.

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*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Committee/Commission/Task Force Created:** No.

**Effective Date:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** PRO: WSP has implemented parts of this bill. The concern addressed by the bill relates to the name of the program. Endangered missing person does not let people know that they need to look for an adult; silver alert leads to public understanding about who is in danger. This will get public attention. This is an important issue for families of people with Alzheimer's disease or other dementia diseases. These people may get lost and not know their address; any person who can walk is at risk. Up to 60 percent of persons with a dementia-related disease will wander at least once. They need to be found quickly to reduce the risk of serious injury or death to these people.

OTHER: The endangered missing person advisory plan is being implemented today and this program is broader than just senior citizens with dementia issues. The endangered missing person advisory plan covers people with disabilities regardless of age. The plan has been in use and is successful. It will be confusing to the public to rename the plan. Our biggest concern is getting information to the public so they can help find missing people. People may not understand that a silver alert applies to a broad range of people. The endangered missing person plan was created to address a larger range of people and it captures vulnerable adults in its current form.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Senator Bailey, prime sponsor; Bob Le Roy, Alzheimer's Assn. Western and Central WA Chapter.

OTHER: Mark Allen, WA State Assn. of Broadcasters; Capt. Rob Huss, WSP.