

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5264

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Health Care, February 9, 2015

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

Brief Description: Creating a silver alert system.

Sponsors: Senators Bailey, Parlette, Warnick, Keiser, Jayapal and Braun.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Health Care: 2/03/15, 2/09/15 [DPS, w/oRec].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5264 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Becker, Chair; Dammeier, Vice Chair; Frockt, Ranking Minority Member; Bailey, Brown, Cleveland, Conway, Jayapal, Keiser, Parlette and Rivers.

Minority Report: That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senator Angel.

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: The bill as referred to committee not considered.

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.

Summary of Bill (Recommended Substitute): Within existing resources, WSP must develop and implement a Silver Alert plan. The Silver Alert plan consists of the voluntary cooperation between local, state, tribal, and other law enforcement agencies, state government agencies, radio and television stations, and cable and satellite systems to seek help from the public in recovering a person who has been diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease, dementia, or another mental disability.

A Silver Alert may be issued if a person is missing and the following conditions are met: the person has been diagnosed with a mental impairment; the request for the Silver Alert has been 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 agency has ruled out alternative explanations for the disappearance.

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: We need a silver alert system in this state. Many other states already have these systems in place and they are good systems for alerting the public to be aware of seniors who may be missing. This can save lives. This will not impact the other alerts that we currently have in the state. Our aging population needs this. The current missing endangered person alert does not work when searching for seniors who are missing. Thirteen percent of the population is over the age of 65; the potential for using this bill to help seniors is very great because seniors are everywhere and in every community.

OTHER: We already have an endangered missing person advisory plan which can be used to find vulnerable adults. It covers a broad range of people, not just the elderly. Existing plans should not be affected. We have concerns with the requirement for written documentation which will slow down the process. The endangered missing person advisory plan is a very robust and established system.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Bailey, prime sponsor; Dennis Mahar, Assn. of Area Agencies on Aging; Diana Stadden, The Arc of WA State; Brittany Stadden, Self Advocates in Motion; Walt Bowen, WA State Senior Lobby; Patrick O'Neil, Cecil Daily, citizens.

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