



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

David J. Valesky

## Senate Passes Legislation Co-Sponsored by Senator Valesky to Assist in Locating Missing Vulnerable Adults

DAVID J. VALESKY June 16, 2011

| ISSUE: **AGING, LOCAL GOVERNMENT, DISABILITY, DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES, POLICE**

ALBANY, N.Y.— Legislation co-sponsored by Senator David J. Valesky (D-Oneida) that will create a clearinghouse for information and alert system to find missing and vulnerable adults passed the State Senate today.

“This is a significant piece of legislation, because it has the potential to save lives,” Senator Valesky, who serves as Chair of the Senate Aging Committee, said. “The faster families and law enforcement can act in disseminating information about missing vulnerable adults, the faster resources can be dispatched and loved ones can be located.”

The legislation (S.3293b) would build upon the previously established statewide Amber Alert system used by law enforcement to alert the public to missing children. This will allow information to reach police officers sooner aiding in locating vulnerable adults who have wandered away from their homes.

According to the Alzheimer’s Association, more than 60 percent of people with dementia will wander away from home at some point. Studies have shown that 50 percent of those who are not found within 24 hours are at serious risk for injury or death.

In order to prepare local law enforcement, the new program will develop training that helps officers investigating cases involving missing vulnerable adults. In addition it creates a toll-free 24-hour hotline that can be used to report a missing loved one.

Several cases of vulnerable adults wandering away from their homes in Central New York prompted the legislation, including an elderly woman suffering from Alzheimer's disease who left her Syracuse home and was later found at her previous residence in Connecticut.

Many health organizations across the state have supported the Gold Alert system, including the Coalition of Alzheimer's Associations of New York and the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP)

The same bill (A676b) previously passed by the Assembly. If signed into law, New York would join several other states, including Illinois, West Virginia, North Carolina and Texas, in taking steps to assist families of vulnerable adults with locating their missing loved ones.

#