



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Dean G. Skelos

Senate Gives Final Passage of “Gold Alert”

DEAN G. SKELOS June 16, 2011

System Would Help Find Missing and Vulnerable Adults

The New York State Senate today gave final passage of legislation that expands an existing alert system to help locate missing vulnerable adults. The “Gold Alert” bill (S.3293B), sponsored by Senator John A/ DeFrancisco (R-I-C, Syracuse), creates a system to help authorities get proper notifications, coordinate resources, and investigate incidents where individuals, such as those with illnesses or disabilities, go missing.

If signed into law by Governor Andrew Cuomo, the bill would use the “Amber Alert” infrastructure, which is already in place, to disseminate information about missing vulnerable adults through a statewide system, using a variety of resources, including television and radio stations, posters, highway message signs, New York State Thruway Authority services areas, e-mail alerts, and the Internet, in hopes of engaging the public in finding leads to locate the missing individual.

“In 2007 an elderly Syracuse woman who suffered from Alzheimer’s disease left her home in the middle of the night and traveled all the way to her former home in New Haven, Connecticut,” said Senator DeFrancisco. “Authorities weren’t alerted that the woman was missing until after she discovered someone else living in her former home. This incident and several others like it demonstrate the need for an alert system to assist in the search for missing vulnerable adults.”

“It is critical that we enact a quick and effective way to help find and safely return adults who go missing from their residences,” Senate Majority Leader Dean G. Skelos. “The Gold Alert system will expand upon Amber Alerts to engage the public and law enforcement in finding individuals with impaired cognitive abilities who may be unable to return home on their own.”

By enacting this law, New York would join several other states, including Illinois, West Virginia, North Carolina, and Texas, in taking steps to assist families of cognitively impaired adults with locating their missing loved ones.

The bill will be sent to the Governor.