



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Charles J. Fuschillo Jr.

Senator Fuschillo Announces New “Gold Alert” Law to Help Locate Missing Vulnerable Adults

CHARLES J. FUSCHILLO JR. July 26, 2011

Senator Charles J. Fuschillo, Jr. (R-Merrick) announced that Governor Cuomo recently signed legislation he supports to create a statewide alert system for vulnerable adults who go missing. The new law will help authorities to more quickly locate adults with cognitive impairments, such as Alzheimer’s or dementia, if they go missing, similar to the existing Amber Alert system for missing children.

“Time is a critical factor in locating a missing person. Adults with cognitive disorders are more vulnerable if they go missing because they require special care and are often unable to help themselves. Enabling law enforcement to quickly distribute information about a missing vulnerable adult will greatly help them safely return that person home to their loved ones,” said Senator Fuschillo.

The “Gold Alert” system will allow law enforcement to use the existing Amber Alert infrastructure to rapidly disseminate information about adults with cognitive impairments who go missing. The statewide system uses a variety of different resources, including television and radio stations, highway message signs, email alerts, and the internet, to get information about the missing individual out to the public, which is critical in locating the missing person as quickly as possible.

AARP noted in a memo supporting the legislation that “research shows that 6 in 10 people with Alzheimer’s disease or other forms of dementia or mental impairment will wander at some point, and only 4 percent of those who leave home can find their way back,” and that “if they aren’t found within 24 hours, the risk of serious injury or death increases exponentially.”

The new law takes effect on October 23, 2011.

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