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[Senator Bettye Davis@legis.state.ak.us](mailto:Senator.Bettye.Davis@legis.state.ak.us)
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Senator Bettye Davis

SPONSOR STATEMENT

SENATE BILL 179-"MISSING VULNERABLE ADULT RESPONSE PLAN"

SB179 creates a new statewide alert system to help find vulnerable missing adults. The system, which is similar to the nationwide Amber Alert program, would help local law enforcement notify the public when a mentally or physically impaired Alaskan goes missing.

According to the Alaska Commission on Aging, there were approximately 7,785 Alaskans suffering from Alzheimer's Disease and related dementia in 2010, and that number is expected to grow to more than 17,000 by 2030. Alaska has the fastest growing senior population in the nation and we can't afford to ignore this problem any longer.

Recently, in Fairbanks, [a 63-year-old woman](#) suffering from Alzheimer's Disease froze to death after she became disoriented while driving, ran out of gas, and tried walking several miles to seek help. This incident and several others like it demonstrate the need for an alert system to assist in the search for missing vulnerable adults. When a vulnerable adult goes missing, his or her best chance of survival is if someone finds them within 24 to 48 hours.

The bill calls for the Department of Military Affairs to coordinate with Department of Public Safety to create and implement prompt response and notification plans that would use a voluntary network of statewide and local newspapers as well as radio and television stations to rapidly alert the public that a vulnerable adult is missing. The bill also calls for both departments to establish standards on what triggers an alert and when a vulnerable adult is officially considered missing. This legislation would ensure the search for Alaska's most vulnerable citizens happens a lot faster.

Currently, there are 28 states that have implemented or will implement Silver Alert programs, an increase of 10 states since the National Association of States United for Aging and Disabilities (NASUAD's) last report.

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State Capitol, Room #30, Juneau, AK 99801-1182 Phone: (907) 465-3822 · Fax: (907) 465-3756 · Toll Free: (800) 770-3822

Interim: (April – December)

716 West 4th Avenue, Anchorage, AK 99501-2133 · Phone: (907) 269-0144 · Fax: (907) 269-0148