AGENET

Alaska Geriatric Exchange Network
An Association of Advocates and Service Providers for Older Alaskans

March 1, 2013

Representative Gabrielle LeDoux
Alaska State Capitol, Room 416
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Representative LeDoux,

Agenet is pleased to write a letter in support of House Bill 59, an act providing for the safety of missing vulnerable adults. House Bill 59 would call on the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs to coordinate with the Department of Public Safety to design and implement an "Amber Alert" type notification system to help locate missing senior citizens and adults with disabilities.

Wandering is one of the most significant personal safety risks faced by individuals with Alzheimer's disease. Nearly 60% of people with Alzheimer's disease wander at some point during the course of their disease. Approximately half of all wanderings result in personal injury if the person is not found within 24 hours (Alzheimer's Association 2011). For an older person, being outside unprotected during the wintertime even for a short time, wandering can have life and death consequences.

A *Silver Alert* system would make use of the public broadcasting system to send out an immediate bulletin when a vulnerable older person is missing. Through public awareness, the *Silver Alert* program would substantially increase the chances of finding a vulnerable adult within the crucial 24-hour period from when he or she first goes missing. House Bill 59 would not present additional costs to the state, yet it would save local public safety departments valuable resources with shorter, more successful missing person searches.

The majority of states have established Silver Alert-type systems. Considering Alaska has the fastest growing senior population in the country, I encourage the State of Alaska to do the same. Members of the Alaska Geriatric Exchange Network (Agenet) are experienced senior service providers from across Alaska and we ask you to support House Bill 59.

Sincerely,

Marianne Mills

Marianne Mills
President

Cc: Representative Max Gruenberg

Mailing Address: c/o President Marianne Mills, SESS, 419 Sixth Street, Juneau, Alaska 99801