

CHAPTER 503

(Senate Bill 303)

AN ACT concerning

Silver Alert Program – Establishment

FOR the purpose of requiring the Department of State Police to establish a Silver Alert Program to disseminate information to assist in locating certain missing persons who suffer certain impairments; requiring the Department to adopt guidelines and develop procedures for issuing a Silver Alert for a certain missing person; requiring the Department to provide training to local law enforcement agencies on the guidelines and procedures to be used to handle a report of a certain missing person; requiring the Department to provide assistance to a local law enforcement agency as necessary to assist in the safe recovery of certain missing persons; requiring the Department to recruit certain persons to assist in developing and implementing the Silver Alert Program; requiring the Department to consult with the State Highway Administration to establish a certain plan for providing information to the public; requiring the Department to consult with the State ~~Board~~ Department of Education to develop a program ~~to allow high school students to assist in the search for a missing person and receive student service credit~~ that meets certain requirements; requiring a certain person to notify a certain local law enforcement agency and the Department regarding certain information under certain circumstances; defining certain terms; making this Act subject to a certain contingency; and generally relating to the establishment of a Silver Alert Program.

BY adding to

Article – Public Safety

Section 3–604

Annotated Code of Maryland

(2003 Volume and 2008 Supplement)

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

Article – Public Safety

3–604.

(A) (1) IN THIS SECTION THE FOLLOWING WORDS HAVE THE MEANINGS INDICATED.

(2) **“CAREGIVER” MEANS A PARENT, SPOUSE, GUARDIAN, LEGAL CUSTODIAN, OR PERSON RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SUPERVISION OF ANOTHER ADULT.**

(3) **“LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY” MEANS A STATE, COUNTY, OR MUNICIPAL POLICE DEPARTMENT OR AGENCY, OR A SHERIFF’S DEPARTMENT.**

(4) **“MISSING PERSON” MEANS AN INDIVIDUAL:**

(I) **WHOSE WHEREABOUTS ARE UNKNOWN;**

(II) **WHO SUFFERS A COGNITIVE IMPAIRMENT INCLUDING A DIAGNOSIS OF ALZHEIMER’S DISEASE OR DEMENTIA TO THE EXTENT THAT THE INDIVIDUAL REQUIRES ASSISTANCE FROM A CAREGIVER; AND**

(III) **WHOSE DISAPPEARANCE POSES A CREDIBLE THREAT TO THE HEALTH AND SAFETY OF THE INDIVIDUAL DUE TO AGE, HEALTH, MENTAL OR PHYSICAL DISABILITY, ENVIRONMENT, OR WEATHER CONDITIONS, AS DETERMINED BY A LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY.**

(B) (1) **THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE POLICE SHALL ESTABLISH A SILVER ALERT PROGRAM TO PROVIDE A SYSTEM FOR RAPID DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION TO ASSIST IN LOCATING A MISSING PERSON.**

(2) **THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE POLICE SHALL:**

(I) **ADOPT GUIDELINES AND DEVELOP PROCEDURES FOR ISSUING A SILVER ALERT FOR A MISSING PERSON;**

(II) **PROVIDE TRAINING TO LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES ON THE GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES TO BE USED TO HANDLE A REPORT OF A MISSING PERSON;**

(III) **PROVIDE ASSISTANCE TO A LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY, AS NECESSARY, TO ASSIST IN THE SAFE RECOVERY OF A MISSING ADULT;**

(IV) **RECRUIT PUBLIC AND COMMERCIAL TELEVISION AND RADIO BROADCASTERS, LOCAL VOLUNTEER GROUPS, AND OTHER MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC TO ASSIST IN DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING A SILVER ALERT;**

(V) **CONSULT WITH THE STATE HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION TO ESTABLISH A PLAN FOR PROVIDING INFORMATION RELEVANT TO A SILVER**

ALERT TO THE PUBLIC THROUGH THE DYNAMIC MESSAGE SIGN SYSTEM LOCATED ACROSS THE STATE; AND

(VI) CONSULT WITH THE STATE ~~BOARD~~ DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO DEVELOP A PROGRAM ~~TO ALLOW~~ THAT:

1. ALLOWS HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS TO ASSIST IN THE SEARCH FOR A MISSING PERSON UNDER THIS SECTION ~~AND TO RECEIVE STUDENT SERVICE CREDIT;~~

2. COMPLIES WITH COMAR 13A.03.02.06; AND

3. IS CONSISTENT WITH THE STUDENT SERVICE-LEARNING GUIDELINES DEVELOPED BY THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION.

(C) A CAREGIVER OR PERSON FILING A REPORT REGARDING A MISSING PERSON SHALL IMMEDIATELY NOTIFY THE LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY WITH WHICH THE REPORT WAS FILED AND THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE POLICE IF:

(1) THE MISSING PERSON WHO WAS THE SUBJECT OF THE REPORT IS LOCATED; AND

(2) IT IS UNLIKELY THAT THE LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY OR THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE POLICE HAS KNOWLEDGE THAT THE MISSING PERSON HAS BEEN LOCATED.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect October 1, 2009, contingent on the ability of the Department of State Police to implement the Silver Alert Program with existing budgeted resources and, if the Secretary of State Police determines by July 1, 2009, that the Department of State Police cannot implement the program with existing budgeted resources, the Secretary shall promptly notify the Executive Director of the Department of Legislative Services of that determination and, upon receipt of that notice, this Act shall be null and void without the necessity of further action by the General Assembly.

Approved by the Governor, May 19, 2009.