



DATE: February 27, 2024

BILL: SB 817 Public Safety - Missing Persons with Cognitive Impairment - Purple Alert Program

COMMITTEE: Judicial Proceedings

POSITION: Letter of Information

Dear Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the committee,

The Maryland Department of Disabilities (MDOD) thanks the committee for the opportunity to provide this Letter of Information for Senate Bill 817: Public Safety - Missing Persons With Cognitive Impairment - Purple Alert Program.

MDOD is committed to advancing public safety of people with disabilities by advocating for comprehensive policies and practices that promote accessible emergency services and fostering an environment that enables their full and safe participation in all aspects of society.

Under Senate Bill 817, the Maryland State Police would be required to create a Purple Alert Program that disseminates information to assist in locating a missing person with a cognitive impairment, intellectual or developmental disability, or brain injury.

The Public Safety Article, Section 3-604, establishes a Silver Alert Program to be administered by the Maryland State Police. Included in the statute, a missing person is defined as an individual “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 whose disappearance poses a credible threat to the health and safety of the individual due to age, health, mental or physical disability...”

Considering the statutory language above, it’s likely the intent of the bill could be accomplished through the current Silver Alert Program.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this Letter of Information. If you have any questions, please contact Lisa Belcastro, Deputy Secretary, [Lisa.Belcastro@maryland.gov](mailto:Lisa.Belcastro@maryland.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carol A. Beatty". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Carol A. Beatty, Secretary