



Klein Bill to Protect Missing Children Passes House

Legislation expands South Florida non-profit A Child Is Missing into national program

Washington, D.C. – Today, the U.S. House of Representatives passed legislation authored by Congressman Ron Klein (FL-22) to help find children in the critical moments after they go missing. The bill, the A Child Is Missing Alert and Recovery Center Act (H.R. 5464) expands the widely-praised South Florida non-profit A Child Is Missing into a national program with regional centers under the Department of Justice. The bill passed with the support of more than 2/3 of the House.

“This is an extraordinary moment for parents across the county,” Klein said. “Every parent’s worst nightmare is to see their child go missing, and today’s legislation can put their minds at ease by utilizing the latest technology to quickly find missing children and avoid potential tragedy.”

When a child or senior citizen is reported missing, A Child Is Missing utilizes the latest technology to place 1,000 emergency telephone calls every 60 seconds to residents and businesses in the area where the person was last seen. The program works in concert with the AMBER Alert, but is activated more quickly, as AMBER Alerts are not issued for three to five hours, and are only issued in cases of criminal abduction. Time is a critical factor, as 74 percent of children who are kidnapped and murdered are slain within three hours of their abduction. Klein’s legislation has the support of law enforcement agencies all across the country.

“A Child is Missing fills a critical gap in time in the most dangerous cases, and can be the difference between whether a child lives or dies,” Klein said. “There is nothing more important than protecting our children, and the founder of A Child is Missing, Sherry Friedlander, deserves enormous credit for turning a Ft. Lauderdale-based nonprofit into a blessing for parents nationwide. A Child is Missing has safely recovered kids from Ohio to Alaska, and with the passage of today’s legislation, we can serve even more communities.”

“The A Child Is Missing Alert and Recovery Center Act (H.R. 5464) will help to provide this program to over 16,000 law enforcement agencies nationwide free of charge,” said Sherry Friedlander, founder of A Child Is Missing. “Law enforcement needs this program now, and has used it with over 366 safe assisted recoveries across the county.”

Klein’s legislation authorizes grants in the amount of \$5 million annually for years 2009 through 2014. The next step for the bill is Senate consideration, and the lead U.S. Senate co-sponsors are Democratic Senator Bob Menendez of New Jersey and Republican Senator Orrin Hatch of Utah, a former chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee.

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