

HB 679 -- AMBER ALERT AND SILVER ALERT SYSTEM

SPONSOR: Crawford

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness by a vote of 11 to 0.

This bill changes the name of the Amber Alert System to the Amber Alert and Silver Alert System and expands its responsibilities to include aiding in the identification and location of a missing endangered person. An "endangered person" is defined as an individual who:

- (1) Does not meet the criteria for an Amber alert;
- (2) Is missing under unexplained, involuntary, or suspicious circumstances; and
- (3) Is believed to be in danger because of age, guardianship, health, mental or physical disability, environmental, or weather conditions; or
- (4) Is in the company of a potentially dangerous person or is affected by some other factor that may put the individual in peril.

An endangered person does not include anyone who is considered to be a runaway to whom specified conditions do not apply.

The bill changes the name of the Amber Alert System Oversight Committee to the Alert System Oversight Committee.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that the elderly population and the population of those with dementia or other mental health issues is expected to triple in the coming years. This bill provides protection for Missouri seniors. Over one half of AAA's elderly clients live alone. In 2013, a senior citizen with Alzheimer's went missing and was alive for 5-6 days after her disappearance. If the Silver Alert had been implemented at that time, it could have saved her life. Supporters say that 26 other states have the Silver Alert System and nine states have similar programs.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Crawford and Catherine Edwards, Missouri Association of Area Agencies on Aging.

OPPOSERS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.

OTHERS: Others testifying on the bill say that the law enforcement alert portal is not currently equipped to handle the integration of the Silver Alert System. It will cost approximately \$60,000 to add

the Silver Alert System into the Missouri Uniform Law Enforcement System.

Testifying on the bill was Kemp Shoun, Missouri Department of Highway Patrol.