



Monroe County Legislature

C. STEPHEN ECKEL
LEGISLATOR - DISTRICT 26

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Committee Assignment
PUBLIC SAFETY -L

August 13, 2007

To the Honorable
Monroe County Legislature
39 West Main Street
Rochester, New York 14614

Re: Public Education Campaign Regarding Wireless AMBER Alerts

Honorable Legislators:

The AMBER Alert program was developed in 1996 after the kidnapping and tragic murder of 9-year-old Amber Hagerman in Arlington, Texas. Within minutes of Amber's abduction, witnesses were able to provide the police with a description of her abductor and his vehicle, however, the police had no way to quickly disseminate this information to the public to enlist the community's help in the ensuing search.

At the prompting of concerned citizens, law enforcement agencies in the Dallas area joined forces with local broadcasters to design a system that could immediately alert the public in an abduction case such as Amber's, where the threat to the child is severe and police have a description of the abductor. The AMBER Alert program uses the Emergency Alert System, the same system used for weather and other civil emergencies, to broadcast descriptions of an abducted child and suspected abductor on both radio and television. Over the past ten years, AMBER Alerts programs have been implemented in every U.S. state, and according to the U.S. Department of Justice, have assisted in the rescue of over 324 children.

Recently, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children and the U.S. Department of Justice have partnered with Wireless Foundation and the membership of CTIA-The Wireless Association to expand the reach of AMBER Alerts by delivering them to cell phones and other electronic devices capable of receiving text messages. Individuals whose wireless carrier is participating in the program may register at www.wirelessamberalerts.org and choose up to five zip codes from which they'd like to be notified in the case of an AMBER Alert. Approximately 200 to 250 AMBER Alerts are activated across the nation each year. Subscribers will only receive an Alert if a notice is sent pertaining to the zip codes they designated when they signed up for the program.

The first three hours after a child has been abducted are the most critical for rescue efforts. The wider the distribution of an AMBER Alert notification, the more hope there is for the safe recovery of the child. Therefore, we request that Monroe County assist in this effort by providing a link on its website that will direct residents to a site where they can register to receive wireless AMBER Alerts. We further request that the County distribute bulletins with information about the Wireless AMBER Alert Campaign to all county departments, town and village offices, school districts, and the libraries within the Monroe County Library System.

Costs associated with this proposal should not exceed \$5,000 and are to be absorbed by the County's contingency account.

Respectfully submitted,

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Carla M. Palumbo
Democratic Leader

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Legislator - District 26

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