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**Governor  
Deval Patrick**in Governor's  
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**GOVERNOR PATRICK SIGNS LEGISLATION CREATING SILVER ALERT PROGRAM TO PROTECT THE SAFETY OF ADULTS WITH ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE, DEMENTIA**

NEWTON - Tuesday, August 10, 2010 - Governor Deval Patrick today signed into law "An Act to Create a Silver Alert Community Response System," an emergency communications system to be used when an adult with serious memory impairment, such as Alzheimer's disease or other dementia is reported as a missing person to any police department in Massachusetts.

Modeled after the highly successful AMBER Alert program run by the Massachusetts State Police, Silver Alert will ensure that the critical communications infrastructure is utilized to coordinate and focus search efforts of numerous state and local agencies, as well as civilian organizations, when responding to an incident involving an adult with serious memory impairment.

"Silver Alert will be as effective in protecting seniors with memory loss as the Amber Alert system has been in protecting kids," said Governor Patrick.

"With the establishment of the Silver Alert program, we hope to give the families of those with Alzheimer's or other types of dementia peace of mind while facilitating an efficient, effective method for finding their loved ones," House Speaker Robert A. DeLeo said.

"It's a simple matter of public safety. Training on the Silver Alert system's use and protocols can now be given to all first responders, including fire, law enforcement, and ambulance and emergency medical services providers," said Public Safety Secretary Mary Beth Heffernan. "It provides another tool to help recover one of our seniors who is vulnerable quickly and safely."

"With an increasing senior population, expected to be one quarter of the Massachusetts population by the end of this decade, individuals with dementia and other cognitive conditions will benefit from the special safeguards provided in the Silver Alert program," said Secretary of Elder Affairs Ann Hartstein. "The Executive Office of Elder Affairs is pleased to be a part of today's signing ceremony with Governor Patrick and to be secure in the knowledge that we are better able to respond to those who need assistance."

Added Colonel Marian J. McGovern, superintendent of the State Police, "In Massachusetts we have had great success with the AMBER Alert program, and it only make sense, in today's world of instant and varied methods of communications, that we take advantage of that capability to help emergency responders locate other vulnerable members of society. By alerting the public of missing adults with dementia, we are extending the search to thousands more sets of eyes to help us find the person in danger."

Twenty-seven states have Silver Alert or similar programs targeting missing seniors. Of those 27, Massachusetts is one of 19 states that use the "Silver Alert" name for its program.

"The Silver Alert bill is a pro-active piece of legislation that will not only help our communities better protect some of our most vulnerable citizens, but do so in a more efficient and cost effective manner. On the Cape and Islands and along the south coast there are over 22,000 families affected by Alzheimer's and I know some of the tremendous burdens they bear in caring for loved ones afflicted by this tragic disease. The changes from this bill will help alleviate some of that stress and I am proud that we are taking this important step in making this legislation law," said Senator Robert O'Leary.

"This is a simple matter of public safety. The more we can do to effectively ensure the safety of those suffering from Alzheimer's or dementia, the better. This is, unfortunately, an illness and an issue with which far too many families in our Commonwealth are coping---it is my hope and strong belief that this new law will be of significant assistance to those who need it," said Representative Kathi-Anne Reinstein.

"The Silver Alert Program will give peace of mind to families who are caring for a loved one, at home, who suffers from Alzheimer's disease or another type of dementia while facilitating an efficient, effective method for finding them if they wander

away from home. With the number of cases of seniors with Alzheimer's and other disorders, who wander and disappear, increasing, this is a necessary program that will save lives and ease the fears of families," said Representative Angelo J. Puppolo, Jr.

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