

SENATE BILL 15

By Black

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 38,
relative to a missing senior alert program.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 38, Chapter 6, Part 1, is amended by
adding the following as a new section:

38-6-121.

(a) The general assembly hereby finds that, in the case of a missing senior citizen, the first few hours are critical in finding the senior citizen. To aid in the identification and location of missing senior citizens, there is hereby created the missing senior citizen alert program. Referred to in this section as the "program", to be implemented by the Tennessee bureau of investigation. The program shall be a coordinated effort among the bureau, local law enforcement agencies, and the state's public and commercial television and radio broadcasters.

(b) For the purposes of this section, "missing senior citizen" means a person:

(1) Whose whereabouts are unknown;

(2) Whose domicile at the time he or she is reported missing is Tennessee;

(3) Whose age at the time he or she is first reported missing is sixty (60) years of age or older and who has a verified impaired mental condition; and

(4) Whose disappearance poses a credible threat to the safety and health of the person, as determined by a local law enforcement agency.

(c)

(1) The bureau shall implement the program as provided in this subsection

(c) and pursuant to rules promulgated as provided in subsection (d) of this section.

(2) When a local law enforcement agency receives notice that a senior citizen is missing, the agency shall require the senior citizen's family or legal guardian to provide documentation of the senior citizen's impaired mental condition. The agency may follow a procedure established by rule to verify the senior citizen is missing and has an impaired mental condition. Once the local law enforcement agency verifies the senior citizen is missing and has a verified impaired mental condition, the local law enforcement agency may notify the bureau.

(3) When notified by a local law enforcement agency that a senior citizen is missing and has a verified impaired mental condition, the bureau shall confirm the accuracy of the information and then issue an alert.

(4) The alert shall be sent to designated media outlets in Tennessee. Participating radio stations, television stations, and other media outlets may issue the alert at designated intervals as specified by rule.

(5) The alert shall include all appropriate information from the local law enforcement agency that may assist in the safe recovery of the missing senior citizen and a statement instructing anyone with information related to the missing senior citizen to contact his or her local law enforcement agency.

(6) The alert shall be cancelled upon bureau notification that the missing senior citizen has been found or at the end of the notification period, whichever occurs first. A local law enforcement agency that locates a missing senior citizen who is the subject of an alert shall notify the bureau as soon as possible that the missing senior citizen has been located.

(d) The executive director of the bureau shall promulgate rules in accordance with title 4, chapter 5, for the implementation of the program. The rules shall include, but need not be limited to:

(1) Procedures for a local law enforcement agency to use to verify whether a senior citizen is missing and to verify whether a senior citizen has an impaired mental condition and the circumstances under which the agency shall report the missing senior citizen to the bureau;

(2) The process to be followed by the bureau in confirming the local law enforcement agency's information;

(3) The process for reporting the information to designated media outlets in Tennessee; and

(4) Any additional processes concerning implementation of the program.

SECTION 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2009, the public welfare requiring it.