

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

COMMITTEE ON AGING

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June 23, 2010
Start: 1:10pm
Recess: 1:55pm

HELD AT: Council Chambers
City Hall

B E F O R E:
JESSICA S. LAPPIN
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:
Maria del Carmen Arroyo
Margaret Chin
Gale A. Brewer
David Greenfield
Peter Koo
Karen Koslowitz
Melissa Mark-Viverito
James Vacca

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Caryn Resnick
Deputy Commissioner for External Affairs
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Deputy Chief Jeremiah Quinlan
Commanding Officer, Special Investigations Division
Detective's Office and Missing Persons

Lieutenant Christopher Zimmerman
Commanding Officer of Missing Persons
Detective's Office and Missing Persons

Jed Levine
Executive Vice President and Director of Programs and
Services
Alzheimer's Association, New York City chapter

Karen Tinney
Policy Analyst for Aging Services
United Neighborhood Houses

Molly Krakowski
Director of Legislative Affairs and the General Public
Affairs Committee for Older Adults
Jewish Association Services for the Aged

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2 CHAIRPERSON LAPPIN: All right,
3 good morning everybody, good afternoon. This is a
4 crazy time this year, I understand and the budget
5 negotiating team is meeting at 1:30, I believe,
6 today so we're going to try to do this as
7 respectfully, as expeditiously as possible. So
8 let me introduce myself, I'm Jessica Lappin, the
9 chair joined today by Council Member Jimmy Vacca
10 from the Bronx and Council Member Peter Koo from
11 Queens. What we are here today to discuss is
12 Intro number 270, which would establish a Silver
13 Alert program in the city to find older adults
14 with cognitive impairments who go missing.

15 Can you imagine losing track of a
16 loved one? Because really there is nothing that
17 is a more terrifying prospect, getting a phone
18 call that your child has gone missing or that your
19 parent or grandparent has gone missing or turning
20 your back for just a few moments and discovering
21 that they're gone. For those families who care
22 for somebody with Alzheimer's or dementia this
23 threat is very real. In New York City alone,
24 about 250,000 people have Alzheimer's or similar
25 cognitive impairment and 60% of individuals

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2 diagnosed with Alzheimer's will wander or become
3 lost during the course of the disease.

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5 Scarier, if they do wander and they
6 aren't found within 24 hours there's a greater
7 than 50% chance that they either will never be
8 found or when they are located will be seriously
9 injured or dead. That's why I think that this
10 city should do what 30 other jurisdictions,
11 including Nassau and Suffolk County have already
12 done and that's create a Silver Alert program.

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13 It's modeled after Amber Alert,
14 which is this program for missing children and it
15 works by alerting the community, primarily through
16 media outlets that a senior has gone missing.
17 This happens after the missing person is reported
18 to the local police department. And depending on
19 the state issuing the alert, traffic signs or
20 emails may also be used to distribute information.
21 In other states that have implemented Silver
22 Alert, they have had very high success rates.

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23 The state of New York is
24 considering this but we're going ahead and looking
25 at this at the city level on our own. And I
26 wanted to note that Councilwoman Maria del Carmen

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1
2 Arroyo who was the former chair of this committee
3 that has introduce this legislation with me and
4 our goal with this bill is to create a program
5 that is specific to the needs of our city.

6 It would require the Mayor to
7 designate a specific city agency to implement the
8 program. The administering agency would be
9 responsible for issuing an alert within 24 hours
10 of the senior being reported missing to the police
11 department. It would then maintain a database of
12 organizations such as media outlets, senior
13 service providers, medical facilities and
14 community organizations in the area where the
15 senior is reported missing.

16 The information on the missing
17 person would be conveyed through means such as
18 emails, telephone calls, television broadcast or
19 radio broadcast. And these alerts would be issued
20 repeatedly until the missing person is found or if
21 the administering agency determined that the
22 issuance of the Silver Alert would no longer be
23 appropriate.

24 I think this bill is a sound way
25 for New York to take another big step towards

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2 improving its age friendliness. Silver Alerts, as
3 I mentioned, have been already proven successful
4 in other parts of the country and I have no doubt
5 it will be successful here as well.

6 I want to note we've been joined by
7 Council Member Karen Koslowitz and Council Member
8 Gale Brewer. I was going to give Council Member
9 Arroyo an opportunity to speak at this point since
10 she has also been involved on this issue but since
11 she's not here, we're going to start to hear
12 testimony. And I'm going to ask Caryn Resnick
13 from the Department for the Aging to speak on
14 behalf of the administration. Does the Police
15 Department want to join up here there? Excellent.
16 We have Lieutenant Christopher Zimmerman who is
17 the CO of the Missing Persons Squad and Deputy
18 Chief Jeremiah, is that Quinlan or Quinton?
19 Quinlan, who is the CO Special Investigations
20 Division. Welcome.

21 CARYN RESNICK: Chair Lappin and
22 members of the Committee on Aging, my name is
23 Caryn Resnick and I'm the Deputy Commissioner for
24 External Affairs at the Department of the Aging.
25 I'm joined today by my colleagues from the Police

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2 Department and Robin Finley, who's not up here,
3 but from also the New York City Department of the
4 Aging.

5 Intro number 270, as you just
6 mentioned, is a collaborative effort between the
7 City Council and the Mayor's office to establish a
8 Silver Alert program in the City of New York. The
9 bill will provide rapid notification to the public
10 when a senior citizen who suffers from any
11 cognitive impairment, including but not limited to
12 Alzheimer's Disease or dementia, is reported
13 missing to a law enforcement agency.

14 Nationally, Silver Alert is public
15 notification system to broadcast information about
16 older adults who've been reported missing,
17 notably, seniors with Alzheimer's Disease,
18 dementia or other cognitive impairment in order to
19 aid in their return. Protocols vary by state but
20 typically law enforcement agencies, often state
21 police, activate Silver Alerts. They can be
22 broadcast on a wide range of outlets that includes
23 television, radio, and electronic road signs. And
24 these alerts also may involve law enforcement,
25 residents, hospitals and other institutions.

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2 Oklahoma created the nation's first
3 Silver Alert system in 2006. Since that time 26
4 states have implemented Silver Alerts or similar
5 programs focusing on missing seniors. Eight other
6 states have other broader missing person alert
7 systems that include protocols for missing
8 seniors. At least 10 additional states have
9 considered similar legislation including New York
10 State. Currently the State Assembly, Senate have
11 each passed legislation to create a missing
12 vulnerable adults clearing house to facilitate a
13 Gold Alert system.

14 At the federal level, the national
15 Silver Alert Act was reintroduced in the 111th
16 Congress as HR 632. It has passed the House of
17 Representatives and is currently pending in the
18 Senate. The purpose of the bill is to enhance and
19 integrate Silver Alert systems throughout the
20 United States. As you are aware, last August
21 Mayor Bloomberg, Speaker Quinn and the New York
22 Academy of Medicine unveiled 59 initiatives
23 designed to enhance our city's livability for
24 older New Yorkers as part of the Age Friendly NYC
25 Project.

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2 Age Friendly NYC builds on the work
3 of the World Health Organization's age friendly
4 cities initiative, which engaged older adults and
5 others in 35 cities around the world in
6 identifying the core components of an age friendly
7 city. As one of the 59 initiatives, the city
8 pledged to develop an alert program that would be
9 added to Notify NYC, the service that allows New
10 Yorkers to sign up and receive notification about
11 emergency events via text message, phone message
12 or email.

13 The Mayor's Office and the City
14 Council partnered last month to launch Senior
15 Alert, a program that utilizes Notify NYC to
16 notify subscribers about missing and vulnerable
17 seniors. We're confident that Senior Alert, as it
18 continues to develop, will serve as a benefit and
19 protection to New Yorkers with cognitive
20 impairment and their families.

21 Senior Alert is an outgrowth of the
22 educational outreach to families of missing
23 persons initiative, an existing city partnership
24 among DFTA, the New York City Housing Authority,
25 the New York City Police Department Housing Bureau

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2 and the Alzheimer's Association, New York City
3 chapter. This group has worked on educating
4 family caregivers of missing older persons about
5 resources and services including the Alzheimer's
6 Association's Medical Alert Safe Return Program,
7 highlighting NYPD resources applied to searches
8 for missing older adults and promoting assessment
9 and service linkages for older persons who've been
10 report missing to the NYPD.

11 This collaboration, in turn, grew
12 from the Alzheimer's Association's educational
13 outreach initiative with NYCHA and the NYPD.
14 Following discussions between NYPD and DFTA
15 leadership concerning the need to inform and
16 educate the families of older missing persons
17 about services that might reduce the incidence of
18 wandering among people with Alzheimer's and other
19 dementias, the NYPD amended its missing persons
20 protocol by instituting a Department order in
21 2007.

22 The Department order ensures that
23 information the NYPD gathers on older missing
24 persons is forwarded to DFTA for assessment and
25 service linkages. Social workers at DFTA reach

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2 out to those with missing loved ones to discuss
3 the particulars of a given disappearance,
4 Alzheimer's Disease and its trajectory and also
5 present pertinent services for the missing person
6 and their caregiver, including referrals to care
7 giver and case management agencies in the
8 community.

9 DFTA social workers also distribute
10 booklets on understanding Alzheimer's Disease and
11 community resources for the Alzheimer's family and
12 provide contact information for resources in their
13 communities. The city in 2008 received an
14 Innovation Award for this collaboration from the
15 National Association for Area Agencies on Aging.

16 Alzheimer's Disease as well as its
17 associated behaviors and care issues is at the
18 forefront of discussion in the field of aging.
19 And estimated 14 million persons in the U.S. by
20 2030 will be diagnosed with Alzheimer's Disease.
21 Families often are the sole caregivers of older
22 adults suffering from Alzheimer's and other
23 dementias and many are unaware of resources
24 available to help them address wandering and other
25 challenging disruptive behaviors. Many also may

1
2 not know about vital caregiver services such as
3 respite, counseling, support groups and education.

4 DFTA is very supportive of Silver
5 Alert efforts, particularly when used in tandem
6 with these type of caregiver supports. We look
7 forward to continuing our work with the City
8 Council in developing an even stronger public
9 notification system to aid in the recovery of
10 missing older adults who are in eminent risk of
11 danger. It is important that the final
12 legislation incorporate the best practices of the
13 NYPD and OEM. We will also continue our
14 supportive efforts through our Alzheimer's and
15 caregiver resource center, through the provision
16 of outreach, education and service linkages to
17 caregivers of older adults with cognitive
18 impairments.

19 I'd like to thank this committee
20 and the entire Council for your interest and
21 support in regard to this important issue and I'd
22 now be happy to take your questions.

23 CHAIRPERSON LAPPIN: Thank you,
24 Deputy Commissioner. I want to note we have been
25 joined by Councilwoman Maria del Carmen Arroyo,

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2 Councilman Melissa Mark Viverito and Councilwoman
3 Margaret Chin. The General Welfare committee is
4 meeting right now across the street so I know
5 people will be in and out.

6 My questions are really for the
7 Police Department. I have just a couple and then
8 I'm going to open it up to my colleagues. Do we
9 have a sense, do you have any statistics about how
10 many seniors do go missing every year that have
11 cognitive impairments? And if you can introduce
12 yourself for the record before your respond.

13 JEREMIAH QUINLAN: Good afternoon,
14 thank you Council. I'm the Deputy Chief Jeremiah
15 Quinlan. I'm the Commanding Officer of the
16 Special Investigations Division for the Chief of
17 Detective's Office and Missing Persons. Next to
18 me is Lieutenant Zimmerman, who is the Commanding
19 Officer of Missing Persons. He reports directly
20 to me.

21 CHAIRPERSON LAPPIN: So do you have
22 a sense of how many people do go missing every
23 year?

24 MR. QUINLAN: Missing every year or
25 every senior?

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2 CHAIRPERSON LAPPIN: Seniors, every
3 year.

4 MR. QUINLAN: The New York City
5 Police Department, generally, we handle between
6 8,000 and 9,000 missing persons a year,
7 predominantly children between the ages of 11 to
8 16. As far as missing persons we record them by
9 age, not by their ability, whether they have
10 dementia or Alzheimer's. If you look at our
11 statistics as far as 65 years or older, last year
12 we had 200 reported missing that were reported by
13 missing persons. This year we have 85 year to
14 date. Of the 200, all of them are recovered. The
15 85 that are reported this year, 73 are recovered--
16 I'm sorry 72. We have 13 outstanding cases.

17 CHAIRPERSON LAPPIN: And when you
18 are able to recover people, is it true that if you
19 get them within the first 48 hours then they're in
20 much better shape?

21 MR. QUINLAN: As far as physically?

22 CHAIRPERSON LAPPIN: Mm-hmm.

23 MR. QUINLAN: If you have a person
24 that's wandering, the sooner you get them back,
25 whether it's an older person or even a child,

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they're going to be in much better condition

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because they're not exposed to the elements.

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That's basically it.

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CHAIRPERSON LAPPIN: Okay, I know

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that Caryn Resnick explained in her testimony the

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Senior Alert that we announced with Deputy Mayor

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Sklyar right before he left the administration.

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And just sort of stress that what we're trying to

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do here is take this one step further. That's

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great and if people are not signed up through

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Notify NYC they absolutely should for this and

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other reasons. But it's a self selected group

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versus looking to do what other states have done

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the way we do Amber Alerts is not to a self

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selecting group but to a wider audience.

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So I wanted to ask the Department

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if there are concerns you have about how we would

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implement this or any problems that you foresee in

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that aspect of the bill.

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MR. QUINLAN: Some of it's

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verbiage. Cognitive impairment, I have two

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children, they're both dyslexic, they're both in

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college. They're scoring A's so if you throw that

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in, I'd like to see the law limited to dementia

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2 and Alzheimer's. Also like Amber Alert, there's
3 also a risk of eminent serious physical injury or
4 death. If we restrict it to those areas, I have
5 no problem with the law.

6 CHAIRPERSON LAPPIN: How do you
7 judge if somebody, a child or a senior, is in
8 eminent danger of a threat?

9 MR. QUINLAN: I'll use the example
10 of Amber Alert.

11 CHAIRPERSON LAPPIN: Please.

12 MR. QUINLAN: Amber Alert it
13 generates an issue response of Police Officers.
14 They do a search of the building to verify that
15 the person is missing, a rooftop, basements,
16 around the area. And then the criteria for Amber
17 Alert, the person has to be less than 18, 17 years
18 of age or younger and there has to be an eminent
19 threat of serious physical injury or death or the
20 fact that they could possible harm themselves,
21 either an abduction or if they're missing under
22 those criteria.

23 It's reviewed, the Detectives
24 respond to the scene. They review the search that
25 was done, they start an investigation and request

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2 a Detective Captain. Detective Captain looks at
3 the totality of the circumstances, does an
4 evaluation and the requests that the state
5 broadcast Amber Alert. By doing it that way, it
6 becomes specific, the importance doesn't get
7 diminished.

8 CHAIRPERSON LAPPIN: Okay. So you
9 would do something similar? You would go out,
10 you'd investigate, you'd search the surrounding
11 area. You would have the detectives come, you'd
12 assess the situation and you determine if this
13 senior was facing an eminent danger or threat to
14 their life or their...

15 MR. QUINLAN: Basically somewhat
16 similar.

17 CHAIRPERSON LAPPIN: Okay, great.
18 Do any of my colleagues have questions?
19 Councilwoman Viverito and then Council Member Koo
20 and then Council Member Brewer.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER MARK-VIVERITO:
22 Thank you Madam Chair. Actually I didn't have a
23 question but it's very timely that this
24 conversation is happening because I was just
25 talking to my elderly grandfather on Sunday and

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2 he's in his 80s. His wife is in her 80s. She has
3 the onset of Alzheimer's and just when I called
4 him he said that they had just found her. That
5 she had been lost, Rose had been lost for about
6 two hours. She has Alzheimer's, the cops were
7 very gracious, he lives up in Co-op City and had
8 brought her back home.

9 Having this kind of a program and
10 having this kind of codified, so to speak, I think
11 is something that again if we're talking about an
12 aging city and we've really been emphasizing that
13 and put a lot of resources into studying aging
14 improvements, districts making this city much more
15 livable for elderly people. This is a tough city,
16 we all know that, for those of us that are
17 completely able to get around. For those that are
18 elderly and having difficulties, physically it's
19 difficult and those that are having cognitive
20 impairments is even much more so. So anything
21 that we can do to facilitate that I think is
22 something very worthy to look after and to
23 implement. So I really want to thank you, Madam
24 Chair, for this introduction and thank you for
25 your feedback DFTA as well, Ms. Resnick. And I

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2 look forward to having this implemented. Thank
3 you.

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CHAIRPERSON LAPPIN: Thank you very
5 much and I'm glad they found her.

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COUNCIL MEMBER MARK-VIVERITO:
7 Thanks.

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CHAIRPERSON LAPPIN: Please sign on
9 to the bill?

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COUNCIL MEMBER MARK-VIVERITO: Yes.

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CHAIRPERSON LAPPIN: Council Member
12 Koo.

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COUNCIL MEMBER KOO:
14 ...Commissioner for coming in. I have a question.
15 Are there any concerns that the Department has
16 with the bill as currently drafted?

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MR. QUINLAN: Other than like I
18 said I'd like to see the cognitive part defined a
19 little more tight to fit dementia and Alzheimer's.
20 And also I'd like to see the alert similar to
21 Amber Alert have some sort of restrictions so that
22 we don't overly broadcast it.

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COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: And also, are
24 there any potential negative consequences?

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MR. QUINLAN: Under those

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2 restrictions? I see it as a positive thing.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: No?

4 MR. QUINLAN: I'm 58 years old.

5 Sooner or later I'm going to be fitting this
6 category.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: What about
8 budget wise? Do we need to increase the budget?

9 MR. QUINLAN: I don't--as written?
10 We have the largest missing persons squad in the
11 country and everybody gets involved from patrol to
12 detectives. So with the current manpower we have,
13 I don't see it adding to our workload.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: Okay, thank
15 you.

16 CHAIRPERSON LAPPIN: Thank you.

17 MR. QUINLAN: Thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON LAPPIN: Council Member
19 Brewer.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Thank you
21 very much. Two questions, one is I'm on Notify
22 NYC and I like it a lot. But I have a feeling
23 even though I publicize it in my newsletter and e-
24 news, not enough people have signed up. So have
25 you found it useful for any of the other current

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missing situations? Is that something that you use as a tool or not, Notify NYC?

MR. QUINLAN: It's part of the tool. Some of the stuff is stuff that we already do. When a person goes missing patrol response to the location. A report is sent to missing persons and missing persons already starts reaching out to the hospitals. They put it in the national alarm system so every law enforcement agency in the country knows about it. And we also notify the Alzheimer's and the Department of Aging so it helps.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay. So I guess OEM would be the one to do Notify NYC if you brought it to that level.

MR. QUINLAN: Correct.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Next question is other jurisdictions, the Chair mentioned Nassau, Suffolk. Are you in touch with any of the police departments there and do you know how it is or isn't working in those locations?

MR. QUINLAN: We deal with Nassau because they border Queens.

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COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: But I heard about Nassau. I know it exists out there.

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MR. QUINLAN: And Suffolk but...

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COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Go ahead.

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But you haven't had any discussion with their missing persons bureau or anything like that to see how they work it?

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MR. QUINLAN: We discuss things with them but not the program.

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COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay. All right. Thank you.

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CHAIRPERSON LAPPIN: Councilwoman Chin.

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COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: You mentioned that last year that there were 200 seniors that were missing and they were all found? Do you know what's the range of time?

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MR. QUINLAN: This year, I don't have last year's range. This year the average out of the 72 that we recovered, the average range is five and a half days.

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COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Five and a half days.

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MR. QUINLAN: Correct, from the

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time that they're reported missing to the time that they're found and that's the average.

COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: So with the Silver Alert, would that help in terms of it may lessen the time that people can be found?

MR. QUINLAN: Based on my experience with other--any time you get publicity on cases, missing persons or even crimes and we get a picture of the person out to the media and the media reacts and looks at it, it enhances our ability because we have that many more eyes looking for the person. So the public's help is always welcome.

COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: So with Silver Alert, then, the potential that it could really help shorten the timeframe?

MR. QUINLAN: It could but like I said, it should be restricted to the most serious cases so the public doesn't become numb to the broadcast.

COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: So what about--how does the notification get it out to a broader group; hospital, local community organizations and especially in immigrating

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2 communities to utilize local media, local radio
3 stations to help get the word out? Because I know
4 that in my community, parts of my community, let's
5 say for example in China Town. Once in a while I
6 do see posters being put up, missing seniors it
7 may say that.

8 MR. QUINLAN: The current practice
9 is that a missing person goes missing, the squad
10 gets involved, patrol response. We do a full
11 search depending on the circumstances, the age and
12 the seriousness. Like you mentioned, we do,
13 Missing Persons prints up posters, index card size
14 that they slip under doors in the area. They also
15 put out larger posters that we post in the store
16 fronts. Certain circumstances, we have a missing
17 persons case now where we have the crime scene van
18 riding around the community, broadcasting the
19 description and posters, handing them out. DCPI
20 puts it out to the media that all the major media
21 outlets as well as the local papers.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: What about
23 the local radio station? In a lot of the
24 immigrating community or ethnic community, the
25 radios are very, very popular. Just in the

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Chinese community alone, there are quite a number of radio that people listen to all the time.

MR. QUINLAN: We put it out the media. It's up to the media to run with the story. So we do get it out through the media through Deputy Commissioner of Public Information but the media or outlets are the ones that decide whether they're going to push the story or not.

COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Okay, thanks.

CHAIRPERSON LAPPIN: Thank you.

And obviously with this legislation were to pass, we would then be using media outlets regularly and communicating more effectively with the public. Thank you very much. We don't have any more questions for this panel. Oh, I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I'm really--I want to cross the street I'm so out of it. Councilman Koslowitz.

COUNCIL MEMBER KOSLOWITZ: Thank you Madam Chair. What happens when you find the person? What happens?

MR. QUINLAN: On a normal missing persons case we find the person, we usually take them to the hospital to make sure that they're okay and then return to their families. In the

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case of an elderly person we deal with the Department of Aging and they provide social services or at least offer the social services to the family and explain to them how they can safeguard that person to prevent it from reoccurring.

We also record a missing person. We keep records of where they're found. Some of our missing persons cases run away frequently so it's easy to track. The easiest way is to look where we found them last time and go back there. A lot of times they're back there again.

COUNCIL MEMBER KOSLOWITZ: Okay, that was my second question. Do you find that some of them keep running away?

MR. QUINLAN: Yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER KOSLOWITZ: A large percentage or?

MR. QUINLAN: I would say a significant portion.

COUNCIL MEMBER KOSLOWITZ: Really.

MR. QUINLAN: Like I said, we handle between 8,000 and 9,000 missing persons and what's true of the elderly is also true of the

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2 young kids that run away. They tend to go back to
3 the same places where they go, where they ran. In
4 the case of an elderly, a lot of times they go
5 back to a previous address that they lived at and
6 were look there. So we keep records of where we
7 recover them. And we also talk to the family, the
8 Department, the Alzheimer's Association to see if
9 they have any history that we don't have.

10 One thing that is good though is
11 pictures. It helps us when we have a photo of the
12 missing because when we put that out it helps.
13 Instead of just the description of what the person
14 looks like, an actual picture is worth a thousand
15 words.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER KOSLOWITZ: Thank
17 you.

18 CHAIRPERSON LAPPIN: Thank you very
19 much.

20 MR. QUINLAN: Thank you.

21 CHAIRPERSON LAPPIN: Thank you.

22 Okay, the next panel and the last panel this
23 morning is Karen Tinney from the United
24 Neighborhood Houses, Jed Levine from the
25 Alzheimer's Association and Molly Krakowski from

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2 JASA.

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JED LEVINE: Hi, good afternoon and thank you fro the opportunity to meet with you today to discuss legislation creating the Silver Alert to provide protection for older New Yorkers with Alzheimer's and other dementias. I'm Jed Levine, Executive Vice President and Director of Programs and Services at the Alzheimer's Association, New York City Chapter. Over there is my colleague, Elizabeth Bravo Santiago, who's the manager of our Medic Alert and Safe Return program.

The Alzheimer's Association strongly supports a comprehensive approach to constructing a Silver Alert system addressing the needs of cognitively impaired adults in New York City. And applauds the leadership of Chairperson Lappin, Council Member Arroyo and the Committee on Aging in leading this effort. I'm not going to go into the background of Alzheimer's Disease because I know that you know that.

Let me just move to the fact that we have been involved with the protection of cognitively impaired adults who wander for close

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2 to two decades. It's a program that I developed
3 in 1990. It was one of the first projects I had
4 when I started at the Association. As you
5 mentioned, 60% to 70% of all persons with
6 Alzheimer's will wander at some point in time
7 during the disease and it is always a serious and
8 life threatening situation.

9 Our program provides outreach and
10 awareness about the availability of Medic Alert
11 and Safe Return, registration in a database that's
12 available 24/7, identifying materials such as the
13 Medic Alert and safe Return bracelet and necklace
14 and wallet cards and clothing tags. Similar
15 products for the caregiver, who if they are in a
16 medical emergency need to be identified so that a
17 person who receives care can get care at home in
18 case the caregiver becomes ill and taken to the
19 hospital.

20 We fax a lost patient emergency
21 bulletin to every hospital, emergency room, the
22 medical examiner's offices, Port Authority and
23 Transit Authority, to EMS, to shelters for the
24 homeless and other emergency responders when a
25 person with dementia goes missing. All of this is

1
2 done in a coordinated effort with DFTA and with
3 the NYPD.

4 And most importantly, we provide
5 support for the family during this episode.
6 Because there is nothing more terrifying than
7 knowing that your elderly parent is out there in
8 this big city wandering and truly at risk. And
9 then we also provide counseling and care planning
10 after the episode to ensure that this doesn't
11 happen again or at least to limit the risk.

12 The program works, 99% of people
13 who are registered and wander are found. If not
14 found within 24 hours, as you know this, a close
15 to 50% chance for those who are cognitively
16 impaired are either never be found, be found
17 seriously injured or diseased. Exposure to
18 extreme weather, such as today, poses a serious
19 threat to persons with dementia who may forget to
20 eat or drink and lose the ability to protect
21 themselves from heat, cold, rain and other
22 inclement conditions.

23 Thanks to previous funding from the
24 City Council, including Council Members Quinn,
25 Arroyo, Garodnick, Ignizio and past members of the

1
2 City Council, we've been able to offer enrollment
3 free of charge for any New Yorker who can't afford
4 the \$55 fee. As of June 18, 2010 there were 1,400
5 plus New Yorkers newly enrolled in this fiscal
6 year bringing our total to over 14,000 New Yorkers
7 who are enrolled in Medic Alert Safe Return.

8 Nationwide there are over 160,000 individuals and
9 there have been over 16,000 safe reunions.

10 Any Silver Alert system must be
11 interoperable with Medic Alert and Safe Return,
12 including coordination with the Medic Alert and
13 Safe Return team, enrollment mechanisms and tools
14 and training and education for first responders
15 and public safety personnel about Alzheimer's and
16 related disorders and the problem of wandering.

17 A Silver Alert program would be a
18 great complement to the Medic Alert Safe Return
19 program as it would expand the scale of our reach
20 in the community and build on the relationships
21 that we have already established and add that
22 component of counseling and care and support.

23 Let me just end by saying that
24 we've enjoyed a productive and cooperative
25 relationship with NYPD since the mid 90s when then

1
2 Commissions Howard Safer appointed the first
3 detective who was assigned to us. We're the only
4 chapter in the network of 80 chapters of
5 Alzheimer's Associations around the country who
6 has a police detective who's assigned to help us
7 investigate when somebody goes missing but also to
8 promote the program.

9 As you heard from the police
10 officers from the Missing Persons Squad that we're
11 now in the patrol guide, have been since the year
12 2000, so that when anybody over 65 and is
13 cognitively impaired goes missing they contact the
14 Safe Return program to see if we know of them, if
15 we've worked with them and how we can work
16 together.

17 I have just one concern about the
18 legislation, which is that Alzheimer's does not
19 only affect seniors. That 10% of the population
20 of people with Alzheimer's Disease are under the
21 age of 60 or 65. So I would hope that any
22 legislation would be inclusive in a way as so that
23 that population who is equally as vulnerable and
24 at risk of wandering could benefit from this
25 legislation.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON LAPPIN: Point well
3 taken. That's very interesting. Thank you.

4 MR. LEVINE: Thank you.

5 KAREN TINNEY: Hi, good morning or
6 afternoon. I'll be respectful of the time because
7 I'll also be--

8 CHAIRPERSON LAPPIN: [interposing]
9 I have to go advocate for your programs.

10 MS. TINNEY: And I have to go catch
11 you so that--

12 CHAIRPERSON LAPPIN: [interposing]
13 I'm not there, nobody's there.

14 MS. TINNEY: Hi, my name is Karen
15 Tinney. I'm from United Neighborhood Houses, I'm
16 the Policy Analyst for Aging Services over there.
17 Just as a background, I have worked in the nursing
18 home for four years, worked in social adult day
19 and home care so I have some experience in working
20 with people with dementia and people who wander,
21 even as far as 50 feet away from the nursing home,
22 who in turn will develop dehydration.

23 I will skip to the end except to
24 say I provided some of the same facts and
25 statistics that I'm sure the Alzheimer's

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Association has done. And just to say that I am here today in support of City Council Intro 270 that would create the Silver Alert system, which would provide rapid notification to the public when an older adult who has a cognitive disability such as Alzheimer's Disease is reported missing to a law enforcement agency. And I really thank Council Member Lappin and the other members who signed on to that.

I just want to skip down to the part where I said even with the best care from family members and the provider community, wandering remains a significant concern as estimated that one in six people with dementia will wander. It becomes important, then, that we create a system that allow for a quick response by the community to recognize and safely return someone who has wandered to their home.

UNH deploys Chair Lappin and a multitude of sponsors on Intro 270, the Silver Alert Act and their efforts to do just this. The Silver Alert system is just one more step towards helping older New Yorkers remain safely in their homes as they age. It is an incredibly difficult

1
2 journey to care for a loved one who has dementia
3 in the community. And this measure will provide
4 caregivers a tool, a safety net that's not
5 currently in place.

6 UNH supports the City Council in
7 its initiative and requests that they be no age
8 requirement for the Silver Alert system. I agree
9 with the Alzheimer's Association, as Alzheimer's
10 and other dementia related disorders may develop
11 at an earlier age than 65. And these adults are
12 at just as much risk for negative consequences
13 associated with wandering.

14 I also wanted to add in reading the
15 legislation that there is a section in there that
16 says the location of a vehicle, the vehicle
17 identification, I would also add given our city's
18 reliance on mass transportation that we mention
19 the frequented bus line or subway line in that
20 alert that that person might be found on.

21 Also I would like to add, again, in
22 reading the legislation is that many seniors who
23 have dementia are not officially diagnosed by a
24 doctor to have dementia so I wouldn't limit
25 somebody's cognitive impairment to a diagnosis of

1
2 Alzheimer's Disease. Maybe using a MMSE, Mini
3 Mental Status Exam, as a screen to initiate the
4 alert system, might be helpful.

5 So thank you again for the
6 opportunity to testify and for supporting this
7 important safety matter for the most vulnerable
8 seniors in our city. I am happy to answer any
9 questions you may have.

10 CHAIRPERSON LAPPIN: Great, thank
11 you. Go ahead, Molly.

12 MOLLY KRAKOWSKI: I'll also be
13 brief. My name is Molly Krakowski. I'm the
14 Director of Legislative Affairs and the General
15 Public Affairs Committee for Older Adults at the
16 Jewish Association Services for the Aged. JASA
17 fully supports Intro number 270. JASA's mission
18 is to sustain and enrich the lives of older adults
19 in the metropolitan New York area so that they can
20 remain in the community with dignity and autonomy.

21 Unfortunately, there are many older
22 adults who suffer from the cognitive impairments
23 including Alzheimer's and this would engage
24 organizations like ours in efforts to return the
25 missing individuals to a safe environment. And I

1
2 just wanted to mention that JASA's successfully
3 worked to identify and train what we call
4 gatekeepers in the community, as they pertain to
5 other programs, elder abuse, etc. Gatekeepers
6 include postal workers, pharmacists, bank tellers,
7 neighbors, Meals on Wheels delivery people and the
8 like. And these are individuals who may hold
9 clues as to the whereabouts of a person or has
10 some clue as to the last person who might have had
11 some contact with them.

12 We would be very willing and love
13 to be of assistance to the City Council if in fact
14 this goes through. We are very supportive of the
15 Silver Alert system and would be happy to be of
16 assistance.

17 CHAIRPERSON LAPPIN: It would be
18 great to get those gatekeepers signed up to Notify
19 NYC so they know when somebody has gone missing,
20 if it's somebody that they're familiar with.

21 MS. KRAKOWSKI: Yeah, and there is
22 a postal alert system in place in the city if mail
23 starts piling up, things like that. So there are
24 some systems that we may just need to look at to
25 pull in some of those folks.

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2

CHAIRPERSON LAPPIN: Okay, great.

3

Council Member Greenfield joined us. Any

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questions? Hopefully...excellent. thank you

5

very, very much.

6

MR. LEVINE: Let me just make.

7

CHAIRPERSON LAPPIN: Oh, please.

8

MR. LEVINE: One tiny comment.

9

CHAIRPERSON LAPPIN: Okay.

10

MR. LEVINE: Just that the number

11

of people that were reported by the police is

12

actually lower than the number of people that we

13

deal with, which is closer to 300 missing people a

14

year.

15

CHAIRPERSON LAPPIN: So that would

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be people who you heard went missing but they

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didn't necessarily call 911 or file a missing

18

person's report.

19

MR. LEVINE: Right and they're

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returned home before they need to do that so.

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CHAIRPERSON LAPPIN: Which is

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great, that's the ideal, right? That they're--

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MR. LEVINE: But the volume is

24

actually a little bit higher.

25

CHAIRPERSON LAPPIN: Okay, great.

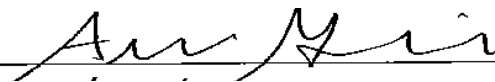
1
2 Thank you for your work on this. Thank you for
3 helping get these seniors home and with that, we
4 are going to adjourn this hearing.

5 MR. LEVINE: Thank you.
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C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Amber Gibson, certify that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. I further certify that I am not related to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that I am in no way interested in the outcome of this matter.

Signature

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Amber Gibson", written over a horizontal line.

Date July 9, 2010