

**Testimony of Marvin J Miller to the
Public Health & Welfare Committee
Proponent for SB 371**

1 February 2024

Senator Beverly Gossage, Chair and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to supply written testimony in support of Senate Bill 371 regarding expanding the Kansas silver alert plan to provide public notice of missing persons 18 years of age or older who have an intellectual disability.

As a parent of a 21-year-old adult child with Down Syndrome and limited communication skills, one of my biggest fears is that something will happen where she becomes lost and is not immediately found.

As parents, we try our best to protect our adult children. We purchase ID bracelets, or place GPS trackers in shoelaces, or offer cell phones or communication devices with locator devices. But phone batteries die, and adult children kick off shoes and take off bracelets. And often times the monthly expense of the GPS monitoring sites are unaffordable on the limited resources many significantly disabled adults have available to them.

As a special education teacher of high school and transition age (18-21 year old) students with significant intellectual disability and non-verbal skills, I constantly worry about what may happen to my students, even after they leave my classroom.

My fear became reality 2 years ago when I received a panicked message from the parent of a 20-year-old former student of mine who had wandered off. As the search began and as Facebook posts were shared, I quickly realized that it may take a while to find someone in a city the size of Wichita. Unfortunately, he was not found the first day and spent a cold night on the streets. He had lost his shoes and was clad only in pants and a T-shirt. Thankfully, he was found that second day, some 8 miles from the location where he had recently moved. I wondered if he would have been found much earlier if multiple thousands of people were on the lookout instead of just a few hundred.

It is my sincere belief that amending K.S.A 75-754 to expand the silver alert to adults with intellectual disability will bring a coordinated rapid response and ultimately save lives.

Respectfully,



Marvin J. Miller
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