

Bilirakis Testifies Before Judiciary Subcommittee as "Silver Alert" Continues to Pick Up Momentum

WASHINGTON DC - Congressman Gus Bilirakis (FL-09) testified today before the Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, and Homeland Security of the House Judiciary Committee on HR 5898, the "Silver Alert Grant Program Act of 2008."

After testifying today, Congressman Bilirakis said, "Today's hearing is a giant step forward in seeing this legislation to fruition. The unanimous statements of support from both Democrat and Republican members of the subcommittee showcase the bipartisan nature of this issue. I am hopeful we can move this through the full committee soon and get it to the floor of the House. Never again should a family have to search for a missing relative or friend without help. We owe this to our seniors."

Congressman Bilirakis continued, "We also owe this to Mary Luccia. Mary has been a tireless advocate of Silver Alert from the very beginning. Mary has never hesitated to share the hurt and suffering her and her family went through as they learned of her mother's disappearance. With Mary's persistence on behalf of her mother, we are on the verge of making Silver Alert a reality."

HR 5898 currently has 87 co-sponsors, split roughly even between Republicans and Democrats. The legislation would authorize the Attorney General to award grants to states to implement or improve a Silver Alert system. It further defines "Silver Alert system" to mean a state-administered notification system to help locate missing individuals with Alzheimer's disease and other dementia-related illnesses.

Another bill, HR 6064 introduced by Rep. Lloyd Doggett of Texas, was also discussed at the hearing. Committee members, as well as Reps. Bilirakis and Doggett (D-TX) agreed that the legislation that eventually made it to the floor would be a combination of both bills.

The subcommittee heard testimony today and will finalize the bill soon and send it to the full Judiciary Committee. Members from both parties indicated their support for the measure and intend to see it through the process.

Congressman Gus Bilirakis is a member of the Veterans' Affairs, Foreign Affairs, and Homeland Security Committees.