



DUEY STROEBEL

STATE SENATOR • 20TH DISTRICT

Testimony on SB 517

January 17, 2018

Chairman Testin and members of the Senate Committee on Workforce Development, Military Affairs and Senior Issues, thank you for holding a public hearing on this legislation. I am proud to be working with Rep. Skowronski on this bill and other efforts to strengthen protections in our state for those suffering from dementia.

SB 517 is a modification of the Silver Alert program that launched in Wisconsin in 2014. Under current law, a Silver Alert notice is distributed to the public when an individual over the age of 60 with a dementia-related condition is reported missing. Today's legislation addresses what happens after a Silver Alert is issued and the situation is resolved.

Under this bill, law enforcement officials who receive the request for a Silver Alert will, as the alert is disseminated, refer the individual making the request to a local aging and disability resource center. These centers are located in each of the state's 72 counties. They provide information about dementia to caregivers and patients and offer referrals to resources that can help those suffering from dementia.

Another provision in this bill authorizes law enforcement to notify the Department of Transportation whenever they confirm that a Silver Alert was issued for someone who was operating a motor vehicle. This will trigger a DOT review of that individual's license ensuring that public safety concerns are addressed. While we want to be careful about changing an individual's vehicle operating privileges, we also want to be aware of the public safety consequences of someone with serious dementia getting behind the wheel.

Caregivers and dementia patients alike will benefit from being directed to resources that can help them. Additionally, those suffering from serious dementia can be protected from hurting themselves or the public by having their vehicle operating privileges reviewed.

Thank you.



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Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee on Workforce Development, Military Affairs and Senior Issues:

Thank you for taking the time today to continue the conversation on improving the lives of those with Alzheimer's, dementia, other significant diseases, and their caregivers.

As we know from testimony last week, Alzheimer's is the sixth leading cause of death in the United States as well as in Wisconsin, and it's the only one is incurable. More than 5 million Americans are currently living with Alzheimer's, which includes 110,000 Wisconsinites.

The effects that this disease can devastate individuals and families and while we can't cure Alzheimer's and dementia here, we can ease the burden of the family members and improve care for those living with the disease.

Wisconsin's Silver Alert has been issued nearly 200 and has been successful in ensuring that 96% of people are returned to their home, to their families or their caregivers safely since its inception in 2014.

Senate Bill 517 is a small fix to the Silver Alert similar to a bill that passed the Assembly last session but did not make it to the Governor's desk. Under this bill, law enforcement officials would refer individuals who've been the subject of a credible Silver Alert to the Aging and Disability Resource Centers. All 72 counties offer these service centers. To ensure that the individual is getting the care and safety they need, guardians and caregivers would be required to attend the referral meeting as well. Another provision of those bill would allow the Department of Transportation to do a follow up to those situations where a credible Silver Alert is placed on someone who was driving to review the Alert and determine whether restrictions should be placed on the driver. This fix would make the Silver Alert maintain the integrity of the Silver Alert program and ensure that those who have had a Silver Alert issued for them are kept safe.

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**Testimony to the Wisconsin Senate Committee on Workforce Development,
Military Affairs and Senior Issues
Madison, Wisconsin
January 17, 2018**

Tim Harrington
Development Coordinator- Workplace Relations and Advocacy Focus

Chairman Testin, Vice Chair Feyen and members of the committee,

I am here today to speak to you today on behalf of the Alzheimer's Association to pledge our support for SB 517. Since its inception in 2014, Wisconsin Silver Alerts have been activated 230 times. All but 11 of those alerts have resulted in the endangered adult being returned safely home in an average time of 20 hours from issuance of the Alert. Of those alerts activated 57% have gone missing in a vehicle, and have been found an average of 70+ miles away from their last known location. While we know that not everyone with a cognitive impairment, such as Alzheimer's or dementia, is at risk behind the wheel of a vehicle, we do know the time will come when the decision needs to be made to take away the keys. The reason is as simple as safety, both for the person, but also for others on the road. The Silver Alert amendment proposed in SB 517 would help identify if the subject of the alert is capable of safely driving. We feel this is something that should have been included in the original version of the bill and are happy it is being considered today. In closing we urge the committee to vote in favor of this change and pass it on to the floor for further discussion.

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January 17, 2018

ADAW testimony in favor of SB 517

Good morning Chair Testin and members of the committee, thank you for holding this hearing and giving me the opportunity to speak today. I'm Rob Gundermann, the Public Policy Director for the Alzheimer's and Dementia Alliance of Wisconsin.

I'm speaking today in favor of SB 517. This bill would ensure that after a Silver Alert is issued a license review is performed. The problem we are trying to address is that we have people who have had more than one Silver Alert issued for them and we want to make sure nobody is falling through the cracks. Every time a silver alert is issued for someone that person is at risk. This bill aims to reduce that risk.

The triggering event for a Silver Alert requires both a medical condition and an action taken by the individual due to their medical condition that puts their life at risk and potentially other lives at risk as well. That is what would proceed and trigger a license review.

Under current law the police officer has to make a referral which can place the officer in the position of being the bad guy and requires the officer to actually take that second step of making a referral which does not always happen.

One of my concerns is with regard to individuals with dementia who may still be living at home and may not have family around to help. If they have a Silver Alert issued for them and we just bring them back home with no follow up the problem is likely to repeat itself and that's what we're seeing. DOT is very good at restricting driving as opposed to just pulling a license. They may restrict someone to daylight driving or to a certain distance from their home and these types of restrictions have worked very well in the past to keep the person with dementia safe as well as everyone sharing the roads with them.

Thank you for your time and consideration and I'm happy to try to answer any questions.