



Legislation Text

File #: Res 0449-2002, **Version:** *

Res. No. 449

Resolution supporting the New York City Police Department's participation in the AMBER Alert broadcast system, which allows police to rapidly notify radio and TV stations to broadcast a message that a child has been abducted, and urging its implementation and use as soon as possible.

By Council Members Vallone, Addabbo, Avella, Baez, Clarke, Comrie, Felder, Fidler, Gioia, Gennaro, Jackson, Lopez, Monserrate, Nelson, Quinn, Rivera, Sanders, Sears, Weprin, Gallagher, Lanza and Oddo

Whereas, The AMBER Alert broadcast system (America's Missing Broadcast Emergency Response) is a voluntary partnership between law enforcement agencies and TV and radio broadcasters to send out an emergency alert to the public when a child has been abducted and it is believed that the child's life is in grave danger; and

Whereas, Named after 9 year old Amber Hagerman, a Texas girl who was kidnapped and brutally murdered while riding her bicycle, the program is designed to galvanize the entire community to assist in the search for and safe return of an abducted child, particularly during the first crucial hours after an abduction; and

Whereas, The benefits of the program were recently demonstrated in California, where after the kidnapping of two teenage girls, authorities swiftly issued an AMBER Alert using radio and TV bulletins and electronic freeway signs to announce the abduction; a tip based on the AMBER Alert resulted in the girls' rescue; and

Whereas, Although each law enforcement agency establishes its own criteria and method in using the alert system, child abduction experts agree that after law enforcement confirms a child has been abducted, believes the circumstances surrounding the abduction indicate the child is in danger of serious bodily harm or death, and has enough descriptive information about the child and abductor, this information should then be sent to local TV and radio stations who will broadcast the information in a bulletin form; and

Whereas, In announcing an AMBER Alert program for Albany in February, Governor George Pataki pointed to the important efforts that must be taken in the critical early stages of a child abduction; according to a 1997 U.S. Department of Justice study, of the 557 cases of stranger child abduction which resulted in the death of the child, in 44% of the cases the child was murdered within the first hour and in 74% of the cases the child was murdered within three hours of abduction; and

Whereas, According to the National Center for Missing And Exploited Children, the AMBER Alert system is credited with recovering 21 children; and

Whereas, When searching for an abducted child, particularly in the crucial first hours, law enforcement must use every method at its disposal to locate the child; even in a city as large as New York, the AMBER Alert system may make the difference between the life and death of an abducted child; and

Whereas, The New York City Police Department, recognizing the efficacy of the program, has agreed to participate in AMBER Alert and is in the process of setting up the program here in New York City; and

Whereas, In light of the obvious benefits of the program, the New York City Police Department should be applauded for its participation and should work as expeditiously as possible in getting the program up and running; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York supports the New York City Police Department's participation in the AMBER Alert broadcast system, which allows police to rapidly notify radio and TV stations to broadcast a message that a child has been abducted, and urging its implementation and use as soon as possible.

TJB

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