

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 1, 2024

The Honorable Hal Rogers
Chairman
House Appropriations Subcommittee on
Commerce, Justice, Science, and
Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Matt Cartwright
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Subcommittee on
Commerce, Justice, Science, and
Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Rogers and Ranking Member Cartwright,

As you consider Fiscal Year FY 2025 appropriations, we ask for your support to provide at least \$3 million for the Missing Americans Alert Program.

It is estimated that more than 60 percent of those living with Alzheimer's or other dementias will wander, and up to half of those who do wander will suffer serious injury or death if not found within 24 hours. One in three children with autism and one in four children with intellectual disabilities wander each year. Nearly a third of reported autism related wandering cases are fatal or require some level of medical attention.

In December 2022, Congress reauthorized Kevin and Avonte's Law, which includes the Missing Americans Alert Program, through 2027. This law is named in honor of two boys with autism, Kevin Curtis Wills and Avonte Oquendo, who both wandered from safety and tragically drowned.

The Missing Americans Alert Program provides competitive grants to promote initiatives that would reduce the risk of injury and death related to individuals with forms of dementia, such as Alzheimer's Disease, and developmental disabilities, such as autism, who due to their condition, wander from safe environments.

Specifically, the program makes resources available to provide education and training to families, school personnel, clinicians, and other community organizations to put in place protocols to prevent wandering and respond rapidly in the case of a wandering incident.

The funds can also be used by law enforcement to train first responders to assist in their ability to recognize signs of developmental disability and dementia upon locating an individual and to provide state of the art technology for first responders to assist them in locating vulnerable missing individuals. When a vulnerable child or adult with advanced dementia wander, every minute counts.

Additionally, we urge the committee to include report language to compel the Department of Justice to fulfill its obligations to Congress by providing a yearly report regarding the Missing Americans Alert Program, as required by PL-115-141. Congress explicitly called for further reporting on data regarding the implementation of Kevin and Avonte's Law. We respectfully request the inclusion of the following language:

Missing Americans Alert Program – the Department of Justice shall within 30 days of enactment of this law provide the Committee with all annual reports regarding the Missing Americans Alert Program, as required by PL-115-141.

The Missing Americans Alert program has enjoyed broad support, including from the National Autism Association, the Alzheimer’s Association, the Alzheimer’s Foundation of America, the National Down Syndrome Society, Autism Speaks, Autism Society, and the American Psychological Association.

We urge your support for the Missing Americans Alert Program in the Fiscal Year 2025 appropriations process.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Christopher H. Smith
Member of Congress




Maxine Waters
Member of Congress



Marcus J. Molinaro
Member of Congress



Nikema Williams
Member of Congress



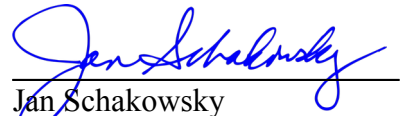
Brian Fitzpatrick
Member of Congress



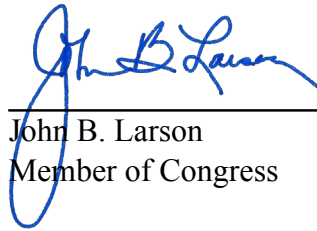
David Scott
Member of Congress



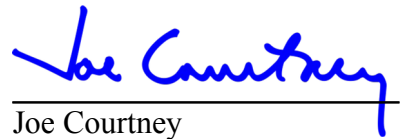
Mark DeSaulnier
Member of Congress



Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress



John B. Larson
Member of Congress



Joe Courtney
Member of Congress