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January 27, 2009

**Raised Bill No. 451 "An Act Establishing A Silver Alert System"**

Madam Chair and members of the committee,

I would like to introduce myself. I am Herbert D. Hicks from Uncasville, CT. Today I want to address Bill 451 "An Act Establishing A Silver Alert System".

My wife has been inflicted with Frontotemporal dementia (an illness similar to Alzheimer's) for the last 3+ years. This illness caused me to retire 5 years earlier than expected. So after 25 years of fire fighting I retired January 1, 2008. This was the only way I could personally take care of my wife.

Since that time, my wife's illness has advanced rapidly. She has become confused and a wandering threat. Directly, this meant I had to add an addition lock to my exterior doors of our home with the key on the inside in fear that she would leave while I was busy.

A program like Silver Alert would help locate her if she was to wander at a time when I was distracted.

Today, I would like to address three items relating to the bill.

**First**, I would like to state that I am in favor of the ID program as presented by John Judd of the Hamden Rotary Club and my other fellow Rotarians that are here today. In addition I would like to add; that in West Virginia, the Legislators, are considering a photo center in the Senior Centers where the data would be collected and entered into a database just like the Rotarians are doing now for children with their AMBER Alert ID program and are designing for the Silver Alert ID program.

So please recognize and recommend the Silver Alert ID program, as mentioned by my fellow Rotarians.

**Second**, the plan, as presented today, is missing an important portion of the State's citizens who desperately need and deserve this type of service. With the Silver Alert Plan, as presented, only citizens age 65 and older are covered. The AMBER Alert system covers children from birth to 18. What do we do with the adults, between the ages of 18 and 64 who are inflicted with health, mental or physical disabilities that if they were left to the environment or weather conditions may not be found in time?

I would hope that our state would be progressive and amend the Silver Alert Bill 451 to cover all individuals, like the states of Missouri and North Carolina.

**Third**, the cost. I know with the economy as it is presently, the cost of any program is in the fore front of everyone's mind. To answer this very question, I wish to make reference to the attached publication, "Silver Alert Initiatives in the States". On page 4 "Issues and Concerns", Second paragraph down, "most of the states indicated that the costs associated with the program were minimal".

In closing I hope you will amend and forward this bill for passage.

And I wish to leave you with this thought.

If you base your decision strictly on cost, then the biggest question that I can present to you today is whether the cost of the Silver Alert program is more important than an individual's life?

Respectfully,

Herbert D. Hicks