

**Testimony to the Joint Committee on Aging
February 26, 2013**

H.B. 6460 AN ACT LIMITING THE RELEASE OF INFORMATION ABOUT MISSING ADULTS

Hello and good morning to the Joint Committee on Aging.

My name is Jessica Ferreira, I am 23 years old and I am a resident of New Britain, CT. I am here to testify about the proposed **H.B. 6460 AN ACT LIMITING THE RELEASE OF INFORMATION ABOUT MISSING ADULTS.**

I am a person with multiple mental illnesses, including depression, bipolar and anxiety disorder and would not like to be discriminated because of it. With the Silver Alert System, I feel this opens the door for someone to be discriminated against because their mental illness. When someone is lost you can look them up on the Internet and the intent may say their name and who they are, but it also labels their mental illness, which I do not agree with. I would not like to be labeled and neither should you.

I feel when you put someone's mental illness online you may or can ruin his or her future. What if they wanted to get a job, and the person who was the hiring manager looked them up and saw they had mental illness. Like I said before, they may not get the job because of this and that is discrimination. Or what if they were living in their neighborhood and people may not understand mental illness, they may not be afraid of them. This may make it hard for people with the illness to make friends – making them very lonely and isolated. That is not healthy for them.

This could lead to deeper depression and other symptoms. This is no way to live. I've been discriminated against because of my illness and trust me it does not feel good. How would you feel if you had a mental illness and someone in the community labeled you and put you on the Internet for everyone to see I don't know about you but I would live in fear not knowing what others think of me.

A suggestion I may have if you must put something up, you could say instead, "person may be in danger." This lets others know to approach the person with care if they find them. This keeps everyone safe and our community safe too. **I am requesting to support the proposed bill and remove mental illness from being seen by others.**