believe it's important to advocate on behalf of all victims, especially our seniors. This is why I am a cosponsor of this important piece of legislation to protect our elders.

Elder abuse is a serious issue facing the country, and whether abuse is happening in homes or senior care facilities, we must do what we can as a Nation to protect these seniors. I believe that because seniors are often unable to defend themselves from mistreatment and abuse, that we must work together to prevent violence from occurring in the first place.

Currently, people over the age of 50 make up 12 percent of the Nation's murder victims and 7 percent of other serious and violent crime. Our eldest seniors, 80 years of age and over, are abused and neglected at three times the rate of all other senior citizens.

H.R. 448, the Elder Abuse Victims Act, sponsored by Representative SESTAK, helps protect our older Americans from this type of abuse. Specifically, the bill authorizes the Department of Justice to provide grants to State and local law enforcement agencies, prosecutors, and courts, to assist in the investigation and prosecution of elder victimization.

In addition to physical abuse, these grants also include identity theft, mail fraud, and telemarketing fraud as types of elder abuse. H.R. 448 authorizes the Department of Justice to also award grant funding to local law enforcement agencies and first responders that assist in locating the elderly that are missing. These grants will support programs that monitor older Americans in an effort to prevent them from facing future harm.

In addition, the bill instructs the Justice Department to carry out a study of State laws and procedures regarding elder abuse and neglect and exploitation. The study will give us a better idea of where we stand and what more we can do as a Nation to address this serious problem.

H.R. 448 also directs the Department to create a long-term plan on how to better prevent and detect elder abuse. The plan is also to focus on the treatment of victims, as well as to evaluate current elder abuse programs.

Mr. Speaker, everyone has a grandmother, and the thought of our grandmothers being neglected and abused is outrageous. Nothing made my blood boil more as a judge to see a case where some elderly person has been assaulted and their case was on trial.

Older Americans, whether they are our parents, our grandparents, or our neighbors, hold an important place in our society. They have lived long lives and given much to their communities and their families. The acts of abuse against them are intolerable, and they deserve the protection that we can give them under H.R. 448.

We passed a similar bill under suspension in the last Congress, and I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the sponsor of this legislation, a former admiral, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. SESTAK).

Mr. SESTAK. The previous bill was on Alzheimer's. And, in my district, I had one of those patients. A few years ago, he was beat six times with a belt buckle. One of his neighbors had dementia, and he was defrauded of $84,000 four months before he passed away. It's why I submitted the Elder Abuse Victims Act.

This incidence of elder abuse, whether it's physical, financial, moral, degrading—and I mean sexual—or these types of exploitations are only growing in numbers. In my State of Pennsylvania, the third oldest in the Nation, between 2006 and 2007, and then 2007 and 2008, the incidences increased 39 percent.

Yet, we are really not sure how many incidents there are. My colleague from Georgia cited numbers may be more than 5½ million. But we don't know. At least 84 percent of them are reported to be unreported.

The issue is that we truly need to step back and have a look, a comprehensive review of all the States and the agencies that are intent upon addressing this issue to some degree and come up with one uniform type of definition and standard by which we could begin to build up the correct reporting requirements we need in order to properly address this issue. Then we need to step over and recognize that we do well, and need to do even better, for our women.

We appropriate $540 million towards violence against women, and $6.9 billion for child abuse, but then recognize it's only a bit over $100 million for senior abuse. And while we need to do more in those areas, we need to bring this one up to a higher level for our seniors.

I speak in support of this growing population of ours. I do so because it was well laid out by both sides of the aisle here that in addition to this one uniform comprehensive set of definitions and standards, that we then need the proper grants given to the law enforcement, as well as the prosecution, as well as the victim advocacy citizens that are trying to do their best to address this.

So, in conclusion, I speak in support of this bill because I think Hubert Humphrey probably had it best: The moral test of a government is how well it does not only for those in the dawn of life—the children—and those in the shadows of life—the sick and the disabled, the handicapped—but also those in the twilight of life, our seniors.

And so I request the support of all on this bill.

□ 1845

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

As a Nation, we are not judged by the way we treat the rich, the famous, the powerful, the important folks that live among us; but we as a community in this Nation are judged by the way we treat the most vulnerable among us, the weak, the innocent, the children, and the elderly. That is how we will be judged as a Nation. It is important that we then pass this legislation to help protect those innocent among us, and in this bill it happens to be the elderly. I urge adoption of this bill.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, prior to yielding back, I would like to glance over at the other side of the aisle and recognize my good friend, Judge POE, who is probably well familiar with elder abuse and this general topic, he having been a trial court judge down in Beaumont, Texas. Mr. Speaker, I strongly emphasize my support of this legislation.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. JOHNSON) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 448, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. SESTAK. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

NATIONAL SILVER ALERT ACT OF 2009

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 632) to encourage, enhance, and integrate Silver Alert plans throughout the United States, to authorize grants for the assistance of organizations to find missing adults, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 632

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

TITLE I—SILVER ALERT COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK

SECTION 101. SHORT TITLE.

This title may be cited as the ''National Silver Alert Act 2009''.

SEC. 102. DEFINITIONS.

For purposes of this title:

(1) STATE.—The term ''State'' means each of the 50 States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the United States Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

(2) MISSING SENIOR.—The term ''missing senior'' refers to any individual who—

(A) is reported to, or identified by, a law enforcement agency as a missing person; and

(B) meets the requirements to be designated as a missing senior, as determined

by the State in which the individual is reported or identified as a missing person.

SEC. 103. SILVER ALERT COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK.

The Attorney General shall, subject to the availability of appropriations under section 107, establish a national Silver Alert communications network within the Department of Justice to provide assistance to regional and local search efforts for missing seniors through the initiation, facilitation, and promotion of local elements of the network (known as Silver Alert plans) in coordination with States, units of local government, law enforcement agencies, and other concerned entities with expertise in providing services to seniors.

SEC. 104. SILVER ALERT COORDINATOR.

(a) NATIONAL COORDINATOR WITHIN DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE.—The Attorney General shall designate an individual of the Department of Justice to act as the national coordinator of the Silver Alert communications network. The individual so designated shall be known as the Silver Alert Coordinator of the Department of Justice (referred to in this title as the ''Coordinator'').

(b) DUTIES OF THE COORDINATOR.—In acting as the national coordinator of the Silver Alert communications network, the Coordinator shall—

(1) work with States to encourage the development of additional Silver Alert plans in the network;

(2) establish voluntary guidelines for States to use in developing Silver Alert plans that will promote compatible and integrated Silver Alert plans throughout the United States, including—

(A) a list of the resources necessary to establish a Silver Alert plan;

(B) criteria for evaluating whether a situation warrants issuing a Silver Alert, taking into consideration the need for the use of such Alerts to be limited in scope because the effectiveness of the Silver Alert communications network may be affected by overuse, including criteria to determine—

(i) whether the mental capacity of a senior who is missing, and the circumstances of his or her disappearance, warrant the issuance a Silver Alert; and

(ii) whether the individual who reports that a senior is missing is an appropriate and credible source on which to base the issuance of a Silver Alert;

(C) a description of the appropriate uses of the Silver Alert name to readily identify the nature of search efforts for missing seniors; and

(D) recommendations on how to protect the privacy, dignity, independence, and autonomy of any missing senior who may be the subject of a Silver Alert;

(3) develop proposed protocols for efforts to recover missing seniors and to reduce the number of seniors who are reported missing, including protocols for procedures that are needed from the time of initial notification of a law enforcement agency that the senior is missing through the time of the return of the senior to family, guardian, or domicile, as appropriate, including—

(A) public safety communications protocol;

(B) case management protocol;

(C) command center operations;

(D) reunification protocol; and

(E) incident review, evaluation, debriefing, and public information procedures;

(4) work with States to ensure appropriate regional coordination of various elements of the network;

(5) establish an advisory group to assist States, units of local government, law enforcement agencies, and other entities involved in the Silver Alert communications network with initiating, facilitating, and promoting Silver Alert plans, which shall include—

(A) to the maximum extent practicable, representation from the various geographic regions of the United States; and

(B) members who are—

(i) representatives of senior citizen advocacy groups, law enforcement agencies, and public safety communications;

(ii) broadcasters, first responders, dispatchers, and radio station personnel; and

(iii) representatives of any other individuals or organizations that the Coordinator determines are necessary to the success of the Silver Alert communications network; and

(6) act as the nationwide point of contact for—

(A) the development of the network; and

(B) regional coordination of alerts for missing seniors through the network.

(c) COORDINATION.—

(1) COORDINATION WITH OTHER AGENCIES.—The Coordinator shall coordinate and consult with the Secretary of Transportation, the Federal Communications Commission, the Assistant Secretary for Aging of the Department of Health and Human Services, the head of the Missing Alzheimer's Disease Patient Alert Program, and other appropriate offices of the Department of Justice in carrying out activities under this title.

(2) STATE AND LOCAL COORDINATION.—The Coordinator shall consult with local broadcasters and State and local law enforcement agencies in establishing minimum standards under section 105 and in carrying out other activities under this title, as appropriate.

(d) ANNUAL REPORTS.—Not later than one year after the date of enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter, the Coordinator shall submit to Congress a report on the activities of the Coordinator and the effectiveness and status of the Silver Alert plans of each State that has established or is in the process of establishing such a plan. Each such report shall include—

(1) a list of States that have established Silver Alert plans;

(2) a list of States that are in the process of establishing Silver Alert plans;

(3) for each State that has established such a plan, to the extent the data is available—

(A) the number of Silver Alerts issued;

(B) the number of individuals located successfully;

(C) the average period of time between the issuance of a Silver Alert and the location of the individual for whom such Alert was issued;

(D) the State agency or authority issuing Silver Alerts, and the process by which Silver Alerts are disseminated;

(E) the cost of establishing and operating such a plan;

(F) the criteria used by the State to determine whether to issue a Silver Alert; and

(G) the extent to which missing individuals for whom Silver Alerts were issued crossed State lines;

(4) actions States have taken to protect the privacy and dignity of the individuals for whom Silver Alerts are issued;

(5) ways that States have facilitated and improved communication about missing individuals between families, caregivers, law enforcement officials, and other authorities; and

(6) any other information the Coordinator determines to be appropriate.

SEC. 105. MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR ISSUANCE AND DISSEMINATION OF ALERTS THROUGH SILVER ALERT COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT OF MINIMUM STANDARDS.—Subject to subsection (b), the Coordinator shall establish minimum standards for—

(1) the issuance of alerts through the Silver Alert communications network; and

(2) the extent of the dissemination of alerts issued through the network.

(b) LIMITATIONS.—

(1) VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION.—The minimum standards established under subsection (a) of this section, and any other guidelines and programs established under section 104, shall be adoptable on a voluntary basis only.

(2) DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION.—The minimum standards shall, to the maximum extent practicable (as determined by the Coordinator in consultation with State and local law enforcement agencies), provide that appropriate information relating to the special needs of a missing senior (including health care needs) are disseminated to the appropriate law enforcement, public health, and other public officials.

(3) GEOGRAPHIC AREAS.—The minimum standards shall, to the maximum extent practicable (as determined by the Coordinator in consultation with State and local law enforcement agencies), provide that the dissemination of an alert through the Silver Alert communications network be limited to the geographic areas which the missing senior could reasonably reach, considering the missing senior's circumstances and physical and mental condition, the modes of transportation available to the missing senior, and the circumstances of the disappearance.

(4) AGE REQUIREMENTS.—The minimum standards shall not include any specific age requirement for an individual to be classified as a missing senior for purposes of the Silver Alert communication network. Age requirements for determinations of whether an individual is a missing senior shall be determined by each State, and may vary from State to State.

(5) PRIVACY AND CIVIL LIBERTIES PROTECTIONS.—The minimum standards shall—

(A) ensure that alerts issued through the Silver Alert communications network comply with all applicable Federal, State, and local privacy laws and regulations; and

(B) include standards that specifically provide for the protection of the civil liberties and sensitive medical information of missing seniors.

(6) STATE AND LOCAL VOLUNTARY COORDINATION.—In carrying out the activities under subsection (a), the Coordinator may not interfere with the current system of voluntary coordination between local broadcasters and State and local law enforcement agencies for purposes of the Silver Alert communications network.

SEC. 106. TRAINING AND OTHER RESOURCES.

(a) TRAINING AND EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS.—The Coordinator shall make available to States, units of local government, law enforcement agencies, and other concerned entities that are involved in initiating, facilitating, or promoting Silver Alert plans, including broadcasters, first responders, dispatchers, public safety communications personnel, and radio station personnel—

(1) training and educational programs related to the Silver Alert communication network and the capabilities, limitations, and anticipated behaviors of missing seniors, which shall be updated regularly to encourage the use of new tools, technologies, and resources in Silver Alert plans; and

(2) informational materials, including brochures, videos, posters, and websites to support and supplement such training and educational programs.

(b) COORDINATION.—The Coordinator shall coordinate—

(1) with the Assistant Secretary for Aging of the Department of Health and Human

Services in developing the training and educational programs and materials under subsection (a); and

(2) with the head of the Missing Alzheimer's Disease Patient Alert Program within the Department of Justice, to determine if any existing material with respect to training programs or educational materials developed or used as part of such Patient Alert Program are appropriate and may be used for the programs under subsection (a).

SEC. 107. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS FOR THE SILVER ALERT COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK.

There are authorized to be appropriated to the Department of Justice such sums as may be necessary to carry out the Silver Alert communications network as authorized under this title.

SEC. 108. GRANT PROGRAM FOR SUPPORT OF SILVER ALERT PLANS.

(a) GRANT PROGRAM.—Subject to the availability of appropriations to carry out this section, the Attorney General shall carry out a program to provide grants to States for the development and enhancement of programs and activities for the support of Silver Alert plans and the Silver Alert communications network.

(b) ACTIVITIES.—Activities funded by grants under the program under subsection (a) may include—

(1) the development and implementation of education and training programs, and associated materials, relating to Silver Alert plans;

(2) the development and implementation of law enforcement programs, and associated equipment, relating to Silver Alert plans;

(3) the development and implementation of new technologies to improve Silver Alert communications; and

(4) such other activities as the Attorney General considers appropriate for supporting the Silver Alert communications network.

(c) FEDERAL SHARE.—The Federal share of the cost of any activities funded by a grant under the program under subsection (a) may not exceed 50 percent.

(d) DISTRIBUTION OF GRANTS ON GEOGRAPHIC BASIS.—The Attorney General shall, to the maximum extent practicable, ensure the distribution of grants under the program under subsection (a) on an equitable basis throughout the various regions of the United States.

(e) ADMINISTRATION.—The Attorney General shall prescribe requirements, including application requirements, for grants under the program under subsection (a).

(f) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—

(1) There is authorized to be appropriated to the Department of Justice $5,000,000 for each of the fiscal years 2009 through 2013 to carry out this section and, in addition, $5,000,000 for each of the fiscal years 2009 through 2013 to carry out subsection (b)(3).

(2) Amounts appropriated pursuant to the authorization of appropriations in paragraph (1) shall remain available until expended.

TITLE II—KRISTEN'S ACT REAUTHORIZATION

SEC. 201. SHORT TITLE.

This title may be cited as ''Kristen's Act Reauthorization of 2009''.

SEC. 202. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) Every year thousands of adults become missing due to advanced age, diminished mental capacity, or foul play. Often there is no information regarding the whereabouts of these adults and many of them are never reunited with their families.

(2) Missing adults are at great risk of both physical harm and sexual exploitation.

(3) In most cases, families and local law enforcement officials have neither the resources nor the expertise to undertake appropriate search efforts for a missing adult.

(4) The search for a missing adult requires cooperation and coordination among Federal, State, and local law enforcement agencies and assistance from distant communities where the adult may be located.

(5) Federal assistance is urgently needed to help with coordination among such agencies.

SEC. 203. GRANTS FOR THE ASSISTANCE OF ORGANIZATIONS TO FIND MISSING ADULTS.

(a) GRANTS.—

(1) GRANT PROGRAM.—Subject to the availability of appropriations to carry out this section, the Attorney General shall make competitive grants to public agencies or nonprofit private organizations, or combinations thereof, to—

(A) maintain a national resource center and information clearinghouse for missing and unidentified adults;

(B) maintain a national, interconnected database for the purpose of tracking missing adults who are determined by law enforcement to be endangered due to age, diminished mental capacity, or the circumstances of disappearance, when foul play is suspected or circumstances are unknown;

(C) coordinate public and private programs that locate or recover missing adults or reunite missing adults with their families;

(D) provide assistance and training to law enforcement agencies, State and local governments, elements of the criminal justice system, nonprofit organizations, and individuals in the prevention, investigation, prosecution, and treatment of cases involving missing adults;

(E) provide assistance to families in locating and recovering missing adults; and

(F) assist in public notification and victim advocacy related to missing adults.

(2) APPLICATIONS.—The Attorney General shall periodically solicit applications for grants under this section by publishing a request for applications in the Federal Register and by posting such a request on the website of the Department of Justice.

(b) OTHER DUTIES.—The Attorney General shall—

(1) coordinate programs relating to missing adults that are funded by the Federal Government; and

(2) encourage coordination between State and local law enforcement and public agencies and nonprofit private organizations receiving a grant pursuant to subsection (a).

SEC. 204. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this title $4,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2010 through 2020.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. JOHNSON) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Georgia?

There was no objection.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, this is the third elder justice bill that we present to date. Like the previous two elder justice bills, this bill also passed the House last September on suspension but was not able to be considered by the Senate before adjournment.

Thousands of vulnerable older adults go missing each year as a result of dementia, diminished capacity, foul play, and other unusual circumstances. For example, the Alzheimer's Foundation of America estimates that more than 5 million Americans suffer from Alzheimer's disease; and, according to the foundation, approximately 60 percent of these men and women are likely to wander from their homes. If they do, the disorientation and confusion that is a part of this illness keeps many from finding their way back home. Their safe return then often depends on being found quickly. If not found within 24 hours, roughly half risk serious illness, injury, or death.

When the House passed the bill last Congress, 11 States had Silver Alert programs. As we again consider this bill, there are now 13 States with the Silver Alert programs.

The need for Silver Alert programs and for appropriate assistance from Congress continue to grow. Last Congress, three Members of Congress, LLOYD DOGGETT of Texas, SUE MYRICK of North Carolina, and GUS BILIRAKIS of Florida, individually introduced legislation to address this serious problem in separate bills. H.R. 632 combines these three bills into one.

Title I, the National Silver Alert Act of 2009, establishes a national program patterned after the successful Amber Alert program for children. It creates a national Silver Alert coordinator responsible for developing voluntary guidelines, standards, and protocols for States to consider in the creation of their own local Silver Alert plans. It establishes a Department of Justice grant program to help States develop and implement local Silver Alert programs. And, finally, the program requires the coordinator to submit annual reports on the status and activities of the State Silver Alert plans.

Title II reauthorizes Kristen's Act, which expired in 2005. Kristen's Act provides for competitive grants to both public agencies and nonprofit private organizations for a national resource center, information clearinghouse, and database for tracking missing adults, training, and other related activities. I commend Congressman DOGGETT, Congresswoman MYRICK, and Congressman BILIRAKIS for their hard work and bipartisan efforts to address the critical problem of missing elders. I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. POE of Texas. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to support H.R. 632, the National Silver Alert Act of 2009, to help protect the elderly, particularly those suffering from Alzheimer's or other forms of dementia. This legislation is the work of three bills sponsored by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DOGGETT), the gentleman

from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS), and the gentlelady from North Carolina (Mrs. MYRICK). Last year, the House passed similar legislation with overwhelming bipartisan support.

By creating a structure similar to the Amber Alert system used to locate missing children, H.R. 632, the National Silver Alert Act, will help assist States in their efforts to protect our elderly. The Amber Alert system was created by the Dallas Police in 1996, after the kidnapping and murder of a 9-year-old girl from Arlington, Texas.

In 2003, Congress created the national Amber Alert program. As co-chair of the Victims Rights Caucus, I have seen firsthand the huge success of the Amber Alert program in locating missing children. Just as the Amber Alert program, which is currently now used in all 50 States, was designed to notify the public when a child was missing, the Silver Alert will also notify the public when an elderly adult is missing.

Mr. Speaker, we have all seen the big freeway signs that have Amber Alert, give the name of the child and the license number of the car that the child was taken in, and now we will see that also occur with the elderly in our community. Citizens can now offer any information they have on the missing person which will aid law enforcement officials in their search. Currently, the Silver Alert is used in 13 of our States. These States have reported nominal costs associated with operating the system, since they are able to utilize existing Amber Alert infrastructure to issue Silver Alerts.

H.R. 632 establishes a nationwide communication structure to coordinate State and local search efforts, and expand the system to those States not participating and authorizes a grant to support State Silver Alert systems and communication networks. The bill directs the Attorney General to assign an officer of the Department of Justice to act as the national director of the Silver Alert program. The director will develop voluntary guidelines that States can use in implementing the alert system and provide training and other resources to State law enforcement agencies.

The Amber Alert system has proven successful in locating missing children throughout the country; so too has the Silver Alert system in States currently using it. By establishing the Silver Alert system nationwide, H.R. 632 will help coordinate State efforts in protecting older Americans the same way the Amber Alert system has for missing children. I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I yield to my good friend from Texas, Congressman LLOYD DOGGETT, such time as he may consume.

Mr. DOGGETT. I thank the gentleman, and I thank my colleague from Texas. It is great that the House is tonight considering a package of elder justice legislation. These bills, of which I am a sponsor of both of the earlier bills by Ms. WATERS and Mr. SESTAK, are complementary. There is really no silver bullet when it comes to trying to help our elderly citizens, but we think that Silver Alert is one component. And, as my colleague from Texas pointed out, Amber Alert became a national program because of something that happened in Texas. I am pleased that Texas also has taken a leadership with Silver Alert.

Just a couple of examples of what has happened with our State Silver Alert program. I had a constituent who began driving south of Austin about 80 miles to San Antonio, then drove another couple hundred miles up to Dallas going back through Austin, and was finally found there. If he had been here in the North, he would have gone through about seven States. And he was clearly lost. They found him in a shopping center parking lot as a result of Silver Alert, and the Austin Police Department was notified.

More recently, we had an example from the Texas hill country in Kerrville, where a fellow ended up driving to San Marcos. Our San Marcos Police Department dispatchers were helpful because of the Silver Alert program, described just as my colleague from Texas mentioned, using the existing billboards and existing resources, was really valuable in finding it.

As Mr. JOHNSON pointed out, since this bill was passed here last fall, two more States have joined the effort; I believe there are about another 10 that have it under consideration. All we are trying to do through the Silver Alert initiative here at the national level is to provide them a clearinghouse of best practices, just as we did with Amber Alert earlier, where we will coordinate federal resources from several agencies that have responsibilities, and also reward best practices of the States, try to see that these are replicated so that we can find these people.

This legislation is also related to the legislation we were just considering. As the Elder Justice Coalition pointed out in a statement that they had today endorsing the Silver Alert bill, they say, ''A missing elder person can be the next victim of elder abuse. It is critical that all appropriate resources are utilized at the local level to assist in the safe locating of missing older persons.''

This legislation has been endorsed by a large number of organizations. There is a recognition, we have talked a lot about Alzheimer's tonight and other forms of dementia, that about 60 percent of the people who are afflicted with Alzheimer's at sometime during their disease will wander off from their caregiver. If they are not found within 24 hours, up to half will suffer serious injury or death. Only 4 percent of those who leave home alone are able to find their way back. And so there is a big gap here, a serious problem, if they leave home in not being able to get back. We hope to use what the States have done, what the Amber Alert success has been to link everyone up.

There are many organizations, as I mentioned, that have joined in supporting this effort; but it came to my attention as a Texas idea because of a constituent, Bill Cummings, who is really a model citizen in his involvement and concern for the community. Bill and Carlos Higgins, who is also a devoted member of the Texas Silver-Haired Legislature, brought this to the attention of the Silver-Haired Congress, as seniors from all over the country came together here in Washington, came over to the office, told me of the success of the program, and asked that we take this initiative. We have now been joined by the American Health Care Association, the Assisted Living Federation of America, the National Citizens Coalition for Nursing Home Reform, the Child Alert Foundation, the Alzheimer's Association, and the Alzheimer's Foundation of America, all offering their support for this legislation.

Finally, as both of you have noted, this has been a bipartisan effort. I salute Mr. BILIRAKIS and Mrs. MYRICK, who I believe is not able to join us on the floor tonight. Hers is not a Silver Alert bill, but it is again a companion measure that we have incorporated into this.

□ 1900

Mr. BILIRAKIS had a very similar idea based on an unfortunate experience in his district. Working together, tonight we can take a positive step forward to keep our seniors safe.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the cosponsor of this bill, Mr. BILIRAKIS from Florida.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 632, the National Silver Alert Act, sponsored by my colleague from Texas, Congressman LLOYD DOGGETT.

I first became involved in this issue of finding missing seniors last year when one of my constituents, Mary Lallucci, lost her mother, who had left her care-giving facility and could not be located. She had driven her car into the Gulf of Mexico and drowned. This tragedy, unfortunately, highlighted the very real problem of older individuals who suffer from diseases which leave them easily confused and disoriented, wandering away from their homes or care-giving facilities and meeting harm because family, friends and authorities could not find them in time. The inability to find missing elderly is a problem State and Federal policymakers should address before something like this happens again. That is why I support this bill before us today, which includes provisions from silver alert legislation that I introduced last year.

The National Silver Alert Act is a bipartisan bill developed by Congressman DOGGETT, myself and Congresswoman SUE MYRICK. It combines portions of missing persons bills that each of us

previously introduced. The National Silver Alert Act includes language from legislation I introduced last Congress to create a grant program to help States establish and operate silver alert notification systems to help find missing individuals who suffer from Alzheimer's disease and other dementia-related illnesses. The measure we are considering today also establishes a national silver alert communications network to assist regional and local missing persons search efforts and requires an annual report to determine the effectiveness of State silver alert plans to help guide their establishment in other States.

I was honored to work with these two fine Members last year and am pleased that we were able to combine these complementary bills. I want to thank them for their work as well as the willingness of the majority and minority on the Judiciary Committee to allow this to come to the floor on suspension so early in this session. The House passed this bill, as you know, unanimously last September. But the Senate was unable to act on it before Congress adjourned. I hope that our timely action here today will help facilitate its passage through the Senate and enactment into law.

I believe that all States should establish systems similar to the highly successful Amber Alert program to help find those suffering from dementia-related illnesses and prevent tragedies like the one that occurred in my community. An Amber Alert system has a remarkable track record of success because necessary information is filtered so that the relevant details are transmitted to appropriate authorities as quickly as possible. The experiences of States that already have developed such silver alert systems suggest that these programs save lives. States have found that timely notification and dissemination of appropriate information about missing seniors greatly improves the chances that they will be found before they harm themselves. I believe that the Federal Government can and should help States develop notification systems to prevent these all-too-frequent tragedies.

This is especially important in Florida, which has more residents aged 65 and older than any other State in the Nation. My State implemented silver alert last year with spectacular results. Florida's statewide silver alert system has led to the successful location of all 37 people, I repeat, all 37 people for whom the State has issued bulletins. More than 4.3 million Floridians are aged 60 and older, and there are about 501,000 probable Alzheimer's cases in the State.

The silver alert program in my State will help prevent tragedy among one of Florida's largest potentially vulnerable groups. Passage of this bill today will help bring other States without these lifesaving systems one step closer to improving their ability to find missing seniors and the crucial few hours after they go missing. It also will provide critical resources, guidance and coordination, which is very important for States like mine, that already have such systems. We have many people to thank for that, including Mary Lallucci, one of my constituents whose determined advocacy for the silver alert has inspired me and serves as a loving tribute to her mother's memory.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. POE of Texas. I yield the gentleman 1 additional minute.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, Mrs. Lallucci was asked whether she thought a silver alert system in Florida could have saved her mother. ''Who knows?'' She said. ''Unfortunately, I will never know.''

I urge my colleagues to support the National Silver Alert Act to prevent another family from being forced to struggle with the same uncertainty.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair reminds Members to not traffic the well while another Member is speaking.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. I will reserve the balance of my time, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. POE of Texas. I yield 3 minutes to the cosponsor of this bill, the gentlelady from North Carolina (Mrs. MYRICK).

Mrs. MYRICK. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Today is an important day for anyone who has ever lived through the nightmare of an adult loved one who has gone missing. The National Silver Alert Act will reauthorize Kristen's Act as part of that and give these people hope. Kristen Modafferi disappeared shortly after her 18th birthday. And after visiting her family and hearing the detailed account of their nightmare, I introduced Kristen's Act in 1999, and it was successfully signed into law in 2000. It reauthorizes funding to maintain a national clearinghouse for missing adults whose disappearance is determined by law enforcement to be foul play. It expired in 2005 and then was reintroduced in the 110th and the 109th Congress. But the efforts weren't successful. Today with the help of my friends on both sides of the aisle, we honor the efforts of so many and pay tribute to mournful families by ratifying this bill.

Kristen Modafferi disappeared in 1997. She was a bright, hardworking young college student, and she attended North Carolina State. She had just finished her freshman year. And like so many young people, she decided she wanted to go to another city to spend the summer, work and have a new experience. So she moved to San Francisco and had just enrolled in classes at Berkeley and got a job at a local coffee shop. She began settling in and making friends. On Monday, June 23, when she was just a mere 3 weeks short of her 18th birthday, she left her job at the coffee shop, headed to the beach for the afternoon, and has not been seen since. When her panicked parents called the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, they heard these unbelievable words, ''I'm sorry, we can't help.'' They were shocked to discover that because Kristen was 18, the center could not place her picture or story into its national database or offer any assistance whatsoever. In fact, there is no national agency to help locate missing adults.

Unfortunately, the Modaferris are not alone. The families of thousands of missing adults, almost 51,000 as of last year, have found that law enforcement and other agencies respond very differently when the person who has disappeared is not a child. It's a very traumatic experience which I know personally in dealing with the Modaferris. But having to do a search on your own without any skills or resources is very unjust. Kristen's Act sends a message to these families. They deserve help in locating endangered and involuntarily missing loved ones.

Endangered adults, no matter what their age, should receive not only the benefit of a search effort by local law enforcement, but also an experienced national organization. With this bill, families will never again have to hear they cannot be assisted because a loved one is too old.

I urge my colleagues to support the act.

Mr. YOUNG of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 632, the National Silver Alert Act, which I cosponsored in the 110th Congress.

At the outset, let me congratulate my neighboring colleague from Florida GUS BILIRAKIS for his leadership on this legislation to create a nationwide communications network to help locate missing senior citizens. GUS was the original author of this legislation last year in response to the tragic death of 86-year-old Mary Zelter, who drove away from her assisted living facility in Pinellas County, Florida, which GUS and I both represent, and drowned when her car crashed into a local waterway.

With GUS leading the way, our community responded by calling attention to the lack of an alert system for missing senior citizens. Mary Zelter's daughter Mary Lallucci become a vocal advocate for the need for such a system and Largo Police Chief Lester Aradi personally undertook a system to establish a local Silver Alert system for our area. GUS and I attended the kick-off for this network when Chief Aradi activated our county-wide system September 30th. He was also the chairman of the committee that coordinated the establishment of a Florida-wide Silver Alert system, which was activated by Governor Charlie Crist and the Florida Department of Law Enforcement last October.

The local model we developed under the leadership of GUS BILIRAKIS, Chief Aradi, State Representative Tom Anderson, Mary Lallucci, Gloria Smith, the president our local chapter of the Alzheimer's Association, and Sallie Parks, the past president and board member of our local Area Agency on Aging, can be taken nationwide to save the lives of senior citizens who wander off in their vehicles. As with the Amber Alert system for children and youth, it

makes those critical first minutes and hours when someone is found to be missing count and increases the chances of a happy ending. In the four months since the enactment of our state-wide program, there have been 41 Florida Silver Alerts including nine last month.

The legislation we consider today will take the Florida model nationwide so that all States can have the benefit of a Silver Alert system and so that we can track missing senior citizens who drive off in their cars should they cross state boundaries. It will establish a national coordinator to bring together State efforts and authorize the appropriation of $10 million a year for State activities in support of the Silver Alert program. Finally, it will provide an annual report to Congress and the States on the program so that we can share lessons learned to improve the effectiveness of statewide and nationwide Silver Alert networks.

Mr. Speaker, this is good legislation and I again want to commend my colleague from Florida GUS BILIRAKIS for his tireless work to keep the issue alive. Senior citizens and their families all across our nation will directly benefit from that action we take today.

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 632, the National Silver Alert Act of 2009. I thank Mr. DOGGETT for his leadership on this issue. This bill allows for the creation and enhancement of alert plans for missing adults across the nation and is an important step toward ensuring the safe return of missing adults nationwide.

According to the Connecticut Chapter of the Alzheimer's Association, nearly 70,000 Connecticut residents have Alzheimer's disease or a related dementia. Six out of every ten people diagnosed with Alzheimer's will wander from their homes or care giving facilities at some stage of their disease. Of those who wander, 50 percent risk serious injury or death if not found within the first 24 hours. For this reason, it is necessary that systems for timely, local search responses are put into place.

The National Silver Alert Act of 2009 provides for the coordination of resources needed by families and law enforcement officials to undertake appropriate search efforts for a missing adult. The bill acknowledges the need to protect the privacy, dignity, independence and autonomy of any missing adult who may be the subject of a Silver Alert, making this bill a truly comprehensive approach.

I urge my colleagues to join me in support of the National Silver Alert Act of 2009 and to continue to push for legislation that seeks to protect missing adults.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, if the other side decides to relinquish its remaining time, I will do the same. We have no other speakers.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time. I urge adoption of this resolution.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. I will yield back the balance of my time, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. JOHNSON) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 632.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

RAISING A QUESTION OF THE PRIVILEGES OF THE HOUSE

Mr. CARTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to a question of the privileges of the House and offer the resolution as noticed.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the resolution.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 143

Whereas, the gentleman from New York, Charles B. Rangel, the fourth most senior Member of the House of Representatives, serves as chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, a position of considerable power and influence within the House of Representatives; and,

Whereas, clause one of rule 23 of the Rules of the House of Representatives provides, ''A Member, Delegate, Resident Commission, officer, or employee of the House shall conduct himself at all times in a manner that shall reflect creditably on the House;''

Whereas, The New York Times reported on September 5, 2008, that, ''Representative Charles B. Rangel has earned more than $75,000 in rental income from a villa he has owned in the Dominican Republic since 1988, but never reported it on his federal or state tax returns, according to a lawyer for the congressman and documents from the resort''; and,

Whereas, in an article in the September 5, 2008 edition of The New York Times, his attorney confirmed that Representative Rangel's annual congressional Financial Disclosure statements failed to disclose the rental income from his resort villa; and,

Whereas, The New York Times reported on September 6, 2008 that, ''Representative Charles B. Rangel paid no interest for more than a decade on a mortgage extended to him to buy a villa at a beachfront resort in the Dominican Republic, according to Mr. Rangel's lawyer and records from the resort. The loan, which was extended to Mr. Rangel in 1988, was originally to be paid back over seven years at a rate of 10.5 percent. But within two years, interest on the loan was waived for Mr. Rangel,''; and,

Whereas, clause 5(a)(2)(A) of House Rule 25 defines a gift as, ''. . . a gratuity, favor, discount entertainment, hospitality, loan, forbearance, or other item having monetary value'' and prohibits the acceptance of such gifts except in limited circumstances; and,

Whereas, Representative Rangel's acceptance of thousands of dollars in interest forgiveness is a violation of the House gift ban; and,

Whereas, Representative Rangel's failure to disclose the aforementioned gifts and income on his Personal Financial Disclosure Statements violates House rules and federal law; and,

Whereas, Representative Rangel's failure to report the aforementioned gifts and income on federal, state and local tax returns is a violation of the tax laws of those jurisdictions; and,

Whereas, the Committee on Ways and Means, which Representative Rangel chairs, has jurisdiction over the United States Tax Code; and,

Whereas, the House Committee on Standards of Official Conduct first announced on July 31, 2008 that it was reviewing allegations of misconduct by Representative Rangel; and,

Whereas, The House Committee on Standards of Official Conduct announced on September 24, 2008 that it had established an investigative subcommittee in the matter of Representative Rangel; and,

Whereas, The New York Times reported on November 24, 2008 that, ''Congressional records and interviews show that Mr. Rangel was instrumental in preserving a lucrative tax loophole that benefited [Nabors Industries] an oil drilling company last year, while at the same time its chief executive was pledging $1 million to the Charles B. Rangel School of Public Service at C.C.N.Y.''; and,

Whereas, the House Committee on Standards of Official Conduct announced on December 9, 2008 that it had expanded the jurisdiction of the aforementioned investigative subcommittee to examine the allegations related to Representative Rangel's involvement with Nabors Industries; and,

Whereas, Roll Call newspaper reported on September 15, 2008 that, ''The inconsistent reports are among myriad errors, discrepancies and unexplained entries on Rangel's personal disclosure forms over the past eight years that make it almost impossible to get a clear picture of the Ways and Means chairman's financial dealings,''; and,

Whereas, Roll Call newspaper reported on September 16, 2008 that, ''Rangel said he would hire a 'forensic accountant' to review all of his disclosure forms going back 20 years, and to provide a report to the House Committee on Standards of Official Conduct, which Rangel said will then make public.''; and,

Whereas, nearly five months after Representative Rangel pledged to provide a public forensic accounting of his tax and federal financial disclosure records, he has failed to do so; and,

Whereas, an editorial in The New York Times on September 15, 2008 stated, ''Mounting embarrassment for taxpayers and Congress makes it imperative that Representative Charles Rangel step aside as chairman of the Ways and Means Committee while his ethical problems are investigated,''; and,

Whereas, on May 24, 2006, then Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi cited ''high ethical standards'' in a letter to Representative William Jefferson asking that he resign his seat on the Committee on Ways and Means in light of ongoing investigations into alleged financial impropriety by Representative Jefferson,

Whereas, by the conduct giving rise to this resolution, Representative Charles B. Rangel has dishonored himself and brought discredit to the House; and,

Therefore, be it *Resolved*, Upon adoption of this resolution and pending completion of the investigation into his affairs by the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct, Representative Rangel is hereby removed as chairman of the Committee on Ways and Means.

□ 1915

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The resolution qualifies.

MOTION TO TABLE

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, I move to lay the resolution on the table.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion to lay on the table.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. CARTER. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, this 15-minute vote on the motion to lay on the table will be followed by 5-minute votes on motions to suspend the rules with regard to House Resolution 128, by the yeas and nays, and House Resolution 134, by the yeas and nays.