



OFFICE OF CONGRESSMAN RON KLEIN
FLORIDA'S 22ND CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

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CONTACT: Melissa Silverman, 202-225-3026 c: 202-821-8152

Klein Child Protection Bill Passes Committee

Washington, D.C. – Legislation authored by U.S. Representative Ron Klein (FL-22) was approved today by the House Judiciary Committee, a major step forward. The bill, the A Child Is Missing Alert and Recovery Center Act (H.R. 5464) will expand the widely-praised South Florida non-profit A Child Is Missing into a national program with regional centers under the Department of Justice.

The legislation was passed yesterday by the Crime Subcommittee, and today by the full Judiciary Committee. The next step is consideration by the full House of Representatives. A date for that consideration has not yet been set.

“I am thrilled for our nation’s children and their parents that this legislation has taken a major step towards passage,” Klein said. “A Child is Missing fills a critical gap in time in the most dangerous cases, and can be the difference between whether a child lives or dies.”

Klein testified before a subcommittee of the House Judiciary Committee in support of his legislation last month, along with Ft. Lauderdale resident and A Child is Missing founder Sherry Friedlander.

“This is an extremely successful South Florida program that is now well on its way to helping countless children and parents nationwide,” Klein said. “Every parent’s worst nightmare is to see their child go missing, but this program can put their minds at ease by utilizing the latest technology to quickly find missing children and avoid potential tragedy.”

When a person is reported missing, A Child Is Missing utilizes the latest technology to place 1,000 emergency telephone calls every 60 seconds to residents and businesses in the area where the person was last seen. The program works in concert with the AMBER Alert, but is activated more quickly, as AMBER Alerts are issued three to five hours after a criminal abduction and only in cases of criminal abduction. Time is a critical factor, as 74 percent of children who are kidnapped and murdered are slain within three hours of their abduction. Klein’s legislation has the support of law enforcement agencies all across the country.

Prospects for passage of Klein’s legislation are strong, as H.R. 5464 has broad bipartisan support in the House, and companion legislation has already been introduced in the U.S. Senate. The Senate sponsor is Senator Robert Menendez of New Jersey and a key co-sponsor is Senator Orrin Hatch of Utah, a former chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee.

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