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A MESSAGE FROM GENE SAUNDERS; FOUNDER & CEO OF PROJECT LIFESAVER INTERNATIONAL ON THE

INTRODUCTION OF AVONTE'S LAW

A message from Gene Saunders; Founder & CEO of Project Lifesaver International on the introduction of Avonte's Law:

I am pleased to see and fully support the progress that is being made by Senator Schumer and his team on the introduction of Avonte's Law.

Avonte's Law will provide the needed funding for training and technology to caregivers and first responders for the express and specific purpose of protecting, and when necessary, locating and safely returning, individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) that are prone to the life threatening behavior of wandering who have gone missing.

Project Lifesaver was the first organization to address the issue of protecting and recovering (by way of training and technology) individuals with ASD who are prone to wandering and for the past 15 years have remained the gold standard.

Technology plays a very important role in addressing this growing health and safety issue. However, although important, technology is only part of the solution. The real solution to this rapidly expanding issue lies in the application of a comprehensive nation wide program that includes; compatible technology and a coordinated training program for law enforcement, caregivers, and other first responders in the areas of search and rescue, search technology, and the conditions, patterns and behaviors of the populations they will be recovering. By having a national comprehensive compatible program, when families move from city to city or state to state, their equipment and the search notification/procedures will remain the same. Also, bordering cities, counties, and communities will be in a position to support each other during a search and rescue operation.

I strongly suggest that all Project Lifesaver member and non member law enforcement and first responder agencies to contact your congressional representatives and ask them to support Avonte's Law, S.2386.

Project Lifesaver is a subject matter expert and advisor on the wandering issue for: Leaders Engaged on Alzheimer's disease (LEAD), National Center for Missing & Exploited Children, the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), the Alzheimer's Foundation, and the National Alzheimer's Project Act (NAPA) the National Council of Certified Dementia Practitioners and the International Council of Certified Dementia Practitioners. The Project Lifesaver training program is recognized and approved by the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services.

**Avonte's Law Act of 2014
S. 2386**

According to a March 2014 study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, an estimated 1 in 68 American children are born with a form of autism spectrum disorder (ASD), a 30% increase from just two years ago. With this rapid increase in diagnosis of ASD, we must ensure that these children are safe and that law enforcement, first responders, schools and the general public are educated about the disability and its effects.

Avonte's Law, named after Avonte Oquendo from Queens, NY, aims to do just that. The bill authorizes a new grant program within the Department of Justice focused on education and safety measures that will help children with autism and other disabilities. Avonte tragically wandered away from his school in NYC and was missing for over a month before his remains were discovered. "Wandering" is very common in children with autism and other disabilities, and sometimes

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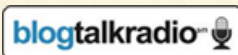
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children who wander are non-verbal or cannot communicate well with others, leading to dangerous interactions with strangers or even law enforcement.

The bill would authorize a \$10 million grant funded through the Department of Justice which would be used for education, training, and response tools to help families and community members that have experienced. It would also require the Attorney General to establish standards and best practices for the administration of any type of voluntary "tracking" system used by law enforcement agencies that are awarded these funds. Tracking devices are one of the many ways we can help prevent another type tragic situation like Avonte's. By taking a holistic approach to this issue, we can help children with ASD live safe and happy lives all around the country.

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