



The Honorable Chris Smith  
United States House of Representatives  
2373 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington D.C. 20515

The Honorable Maxine Waters  
United States House of Representatives  
2221 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington D.C. 20515

November 2, 2017

Dear Representatives Smith and Waters:

On behalf of the Alzheimer's Impact Movement (AIM) and the Alzheimer's Association, including our nationwide network of advocates, thank you for your continued leadership on issues and legislation important to Americans with Alzheimer's and other dementias, and to their caregivers. AIM and the Alzheimer's Association are pleased to support the bipartisan reauthorization of the Missing Americans Alert Program, formerly known as the Missing Alzheimer's Disease Patient Alert Program, in *Kevin and Avonte's Law of 2017*, which would help local law enforcement identify and reunite individuals with Alzheimer's disease and their families.

More than 5 million Americans are living with Alzheimer's disease and without significant action, as many as 16 million Americans will have Alzheimer's by 2050. Today, another person develops the disease every 66 seconds; by 2050, someone in the United States will develop the disease every 33 seconds. This explosive growth will cause Alzheimer's costs to increase from an estimated \$259 billion in 2017 to \$1.1 trillion in 2050 (in 2017 dollars). These mounting costs threaten to bankrupt families, businesses and our health care system.

As the threat of Alzheimer's continues to touch more people's lives, the safety of these individuals will continue to be of tremendous concern. It is common for a person with dementia to experience profound disorientation and wander from their homes or care facilities, and many do so repeatedly. At least 60 percent of individuals with Alzheimer's disease will wander at some point during their lifetime. Wandering not only affects individuals with dementia – sometimes leading to serious injury or death, but also causes considerable emotional strain on families and caregivers. In some instances, wandering can even endanger the lives of others within the community.

*Kevin and Avonte's Law of 2017* will help individuals with Alzheimer's disease who wander away from their homes and are unable to tell people in the community who they are or where they live. The bill reauthorizes a Department of Justice program that helps local law enforcement officials quickly identify wandering individuals with Alzheimer's and reunite them with their families. Reauthorization of the Missing Americans Alert Program is essential to addressing the issue of wandering and Alzheimer's disease, and its impact on individuals with Alzheimer's and their family caregivers, local communities and law enforcement.

The Alzheimer's Association and AIM deeply appreciate your continued leadership on behalf of all Americans living with Alzheimer's and other dementias. We look forward to continuing to work with you and your colleagues to improve care and support for individuals and families affected by Alzheimer's disease and other dementias. If you have any questions about this or any other legislation, please contact Rachel Conant, Senior Director of Federal Affairs, at [rconant@alz-aim.org](mailto:rconant@alz-aim.org) or at 202.638.7121.

Sincerely,

Robert Egge  
Chief Public Policy Officer  
Executive Vice President, Government Affairs  
Alzheimer's Association

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