

## Rothman Calls For Immediate Passage Of National AMBER Alert Bill

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Says Safe Return Of Elizabeth Smart Demonstrates  
Need For Immediate Passage Of Measure

Washington, DC - Congressman Steve Rothman (D-NJ9) today renewed his call for the immediate passage of the National AMBER (America's Missing Broadcast Emergency Response) Alert Network Act, which would help develop AMBER Alert systems all across the country. Rothman, who is a cosponsor of the measure, said that the discovery and safe return yesterday of Elizabeth Smart should highlight the fact that this nation needs to immediately implement the AMBER Alert, which has already been established in some form in 39 states, including New Jersey.

"Americans' hearts were filled with joy yesterday upon hearing the news that Elizabeth Smart was safely returned to her parents' arms, but we are also angry that the House has yet to allow a vote on the Amber Alert bill despite strong bipartisan support," said Rothman, who is a longtime member of the Congressional Missing and Exploited Children's Caucus. "Just last week in New Jersey we saw the effectiveness of our state's own AMBER Alert system when a 2-year old girl was kidnapped and found alive and well after police issued an AMBER alert. They broadcasted details about the car she was taken in and the appearance of her abductor on electronic bulletin boards, radio, and television. While we were very fortunate to find her, the outcome may have been different had the abduction taken place in an area without an AMBER Alert system."

The bipartisan National AMBER Alert Network Act that Rothman supports would establish an AMBER Alert Coordinator at the U.S. Department of Justice and provide \$25 million to state and local entities for highway signs, education and training programs, and equipment to build better AMBER Alert systems. An identical AMBER Alert bill in the Senate passed in January. The Republican leadership's refusal to bring up the House bill for a vote is the only step preventing the AMBER Alert from being passed by Congress and sent to the White House for President Bush to sign into law.

"The AMBER Alert plan has a proven track record of finding missing children, but AMBER Alerts are most successful only where they are fully functioning and effectively utilizing every communications tool," Rothman said. "Law enforcement officials have said that AMBER Alerts are critical tools in quickly finding abducted children before it is too late, which is why Congress must pass a national AMBER Alert plan immediately in order to save more lives of innocent children."

Since it was created in the Dallas-Fort Worth region after the tragic abduction and murder of 9-year old Amber Hagerman in 1996, the AMBER Alert has been credited with the safe return of at least 49 abducted children.

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