



# Office of the City Clerk

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## Legislation Text

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**File #:** Or2013-497, **Version:** 1

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Public Safety

WHEREAS, in the early morning hours of July 17, 2013, New York area cellphones blared with a message about a 7-month-old boy who had been abducted from a foster care agency in Harlem hours earlier by his mother, who had a history of mental illness; and

WHEREAS, after learning that the child might be riding in a car, the cellphone alert" included the car's license plate number and, according to New York City Police, it directly led to the child being located; and

WHEREAS, it was the first mass Amber Alert sent to cellphones in New York City since a national wireless emergency alert system was established; and

WHEREAS, the Amber Alert was transmitted via a national cellular network, known as the Wireless Emergency Alerts system, which was mandated by Congress as a way to supplement radio and television broadcasts; and

WHEREAS, the Wireless Emergency Alerts system was built through a partnership of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the Federal Communications Commission and the wireless industry; and

WHEREAS, FEMA, which administers the network, has authorized designated federal, state and local agencies to use it; and

WHEREAS, after an alert from an agency, FEMA transmits it to cellular carriers, which then relay it to cellphone users; and

WHEREAS, alerts consist of extreme weather and other threatening emergencies in the area, AMBER Alerts, and Presidential Alerts during a national emergency; and

WHEREAS, according to FEMA officials, the first alerts went out in 2011, and most of them have been weather-related warnings; and

WHEREAS, Amber Alerts were first issued in the 1990s in the Dallas-Fort Worth area after a local girl was abducted and murdered; and

WHEREAS, the alerts, which initially were initially broadcast on TV and radio, later spread to road signs, social media sites, and now cellphones ; and

WHEREAS, according to the cellphone industry, more than 300 million people use cellphones in the United Sates; and

WHEREAS, more than 50 alerts for abducted children have been carried on cellphones around the country since December of 2012; and

WHEREAS, roughly 20,000 people, of which approximately 60% are 17 years of age or younger, are reported missing in Chicago each year; and

WHEREAS, many missing minors are vulnerable and at great risk of both physical harm and sexual exploitation; and

WHEREAS, missing person reports involving minors and other high risk persons require an intensive response by the police department; and

WHEREAS, according to the U.S. Department of Justice, the first 3 hours after an abduction are the most critical to law enforcement authorities to ensure the safe return of the victim; and

WHEREAS, rapid and widespread dissemination of information regarding reported missing minors and other high risk individuals designed to elicit public assistance in the search for missing persons is crucial; NOW THEREFORE

**BE IT ORDERED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CHICAGO:**

That the Superintendent of the Department of Police and the Executive Directive of the Office of Emergency Management and Communications are hereby ordered to complete the necessary authentication steps to use the Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS); and

**BE IT FURTHER ORDERED:**

*Edward M/Burke ' r '*  
Alderman, 14th Ward

That representatives from the Department of Police and the Office of Emergency Management and Communications are hereby ordered to appear before the Committee on Public Safety to testify as to the status of completing the necessary authentication steps to use the Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS).