



***Project Lifesaver***  
*International Headquarter*  
*Directorate/Development Division*  
*Project Lifesaver International*  
*815 Battlefield Blvd. South*  
*Chesapeake, Virginia 23322*



*Chief Executive Officer/Founder*  
*Gene Saunders*

*Chief – Operations*  
*Tommy Carter*

*Chief - Administration*  
*Scott Nester*

**Proposed Legislation by Laramie County, State Representative; Ken Esquibel  
&  
Laramie County, State Senator; Wayne Johnson**

*The purpose of this Legislation is to protect Individuals with Alzheimer's, Autism and other Cognitive Disorders who are Prone to the Life Threatening Behavior of Wandering*

Laramie County State Representative Ken Esquibel and Laramie County State Senator Wayne Johnson have proposed a significant piece of legislation that will protect and when necessary, quickly locate individuals with Alzheimer's, Autism and other cognitive disorders who are prone to the life threatening behavior of wandering.

The proposed legislation will make funds available statewide to local Wyoming community first responders and the families and caregivers of those special needs individuals who qualify for enrollment into the Project Lifesaver program. The Project Lifesaver program is a 501 (C) (3) community based, public safety, non-profit organization that provides law enforcement, fire/rescue, other first responders and caregivers, with technology and training to protect, and when necessary, quickly locate individuals with cognitive disorders who have wandered.

The primary catalyst for the proposed legislation is related to a local Wyoming community tragedy. On November 25, 2009 an 85 year old Alzheimer's patient was reported missing. The combined search efforts by law enforcement, emergency services, search and rescue and many community volunteers was intense and emotional. He was found a few days after he had gone missing only several blocks from where he was last seen. He had died from exposure to inclement weather. His death, under those circumstances made a long lasting impression on all in the community. At that point those involved in the search efforts were committed to never allowing this to happen again.

After intense research into how best to protect this most vulnerable population, the Project Lifesaver program was chosen. Project Lifesaver is a non-profit with no commercial interests and more than 15 years of experience in the search, rescue, and protection of individuals with cognitive disorders who wander. The Project Lifesaver program provides first responders with an understanding of the symptoms and behaviors of the individuals that they are recovering; giving Project Lifesaver trained and certified first responders the tools to assess and effectively manage the safe and comfortable return of the "At Risk" individual.

The Project Lifesaver training program is recognized and approved by the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services and The Department of Justice. Project Lifesaver is both the first organization to apply protection and locating technology for the search and rescue of individuals with cognitive disorders and has remained the leader, the Gold Standard.

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).

This proposed legislation is fully supported by:

Laramie County Sheriff Department, the Cheyenne Police Department, the Cheyenne Fire Department, Laramie County Emergency Management, the Laramie County Volunteer Fire Districts, Natrona County Emergency Management, the Wyoming Mounted Association, the Southeast Wyoming Search and Rescue Team, the Laramie County Volunteer Search and Rescue Teams, Laramie County Emergency Ambulance Services, local Wyoming VFW Chapter and the Sons of the American Legion, and numerous community civic groups, businesses, churches, and private individuals.

Keeping our loved ones safe is always a top priority but it is even of greater concern when those loved ones are living with cognitive conditions such as Alzheimer's, or Autism since they may be prone to wandering.

Wandering is one of the most frightening and potentially life-threatening behaviors that may accompany a cognitive condition. As many as 60 percent of the 4.5 million Americans with Alzheimer's disease will wander at some point and a recent study of Autistic children showed that 50% of all children with Autism wander. The Autism wandering and elopement study found that approximately half of parents of children with autism report that their child elopes, with the behavior peaking at age four. Among these families, nearly 50% say that their child went missing long enough to cause significant concern about safety.

The statistics related to wandering behavior is reason for concern: If a person is lost and not found within 24 hours, the chance for serious injury and even death is nearly 50 percent. This holds especially true during the cold winter months when individuals are vulnerable to harsh weather conditions or if the individual lives near water.

Wandering can happen anytime for an individual with a cognitive disorder and if a person wanders once it is likely that they will wander again. Any number of factors can trigger a wandering episode.

This Draft legislation would not have been possible without the tireless efforts of many dedicated individuals such as; Detective Donald F. Heiduck of the Laramie County Sheriff's Department and Officer Becky Gerrard of the Cheyenne Police Department, along with the support of many of their public safety/service colleagues, public officials such as Representative Esquibel and Senator Johnson and an army of community minded concerned Wyoming citizens and community organizations.

Contact your State Senator and House members to express your support for this Draft legislation:

Senate Members of the 62nd Wyoming Legislature:

<http://legisweb.state.wy.us/LegislatorSummary/LegislatorList.aspx?strHouse=S&strStatus=N>

House Members of the 62nd Wyoming Legislature:

<http://legisweb.state.wy.us/LegislatorSummary/LegislatorList.aspx?strHouse=H&strStatus=N>

For more information about this Draft legislation contact Representative Esquibel at [ken.esquibel@wyoleg.gov](mailto:ken.esquibel@wyoleg.gov) or Senator Johnson at [Wayne.Johnson@wyoleg.gov](mailto:Wayne.Johnson@wyoleg.gov)

For more information about the Project Lifesaver program contact Joseph Salenetri at [josephsalenetri@hotmail.com](mailto:josephsalenetri@hotmail.com) or Elizabeth Kappes at [ekappes@projectlifesaver.org](mailto:ekappes@projectlifesaver.org)