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Remarks prepared for delivery by Congressman Spencer Bachus at a news conference in Mountain Brook on April 22, 2008 on the “A Child Is Missing Alert Program.” □ The program, which is free of charge to participating law enforcement agencies, sends out instant telephone alerts on missing persons to residents in the surrounding area.

It is a pleasure to be in Mountain Brook with Mayor Terry Oden, who does so much for the community.

I also want to commend Police Chief Johnny Stanley for hosting this regional training session for the “A Child Is Missing Alert Program.” This will help our law enforcement community with their search for missing children, college students on campus, the disabled, and the elderly – often with Alzheimer’s.

This can really be called a new first responder for Mountain Brook and the entire region.

When police get information on a missing person and notifies this program, within minutes this free service can send out some 1000 telephone calls in one minute to citizens in the area asking them if they have seen the person or have any information.

Timing and coordination can make all the difference in finding a missing person. The more time that elapses, the harder it is to find an abductor and his victim. Many of us remember the national news coverage of Elizabeth Smart, the 14 year old girl from Utah who was kidnapped from her own bedroom and finally found nine months later, some 18 miles away from her home.

The same applies to solving tragic cases. There was recently a tragic case at Auburn University where a 19 year old student, Lauren Burk, was robbed and killed near campus.

Her car was set on fire, a few miles away.

There was no immediate obvious suspect.

But working together and following up on every lead, the authorities made an arrest within three days and the suspect has confessed to the crime in court. While there is nothing we can do to reverse the great pain of this senseless murder, a dangerous criminal was taken off the streets before he could do more harm.

The people of Alabama can be proud of the advances being made to protect public safety.

Congress passed the AMBER alert system which President Bush signed into law in April 2003. Many people are now familiar with this through the information that goes out on television and radio broadcasts and even the Internet and electronic highway signs.

The AMBER alert program has helped to reunite more than 360 missing children with their families.

The “A Child Is Missing Alert Program” can be used in tandem with AMBER Alerts, increasing the effectiveness of both.

Recently, I had the opportunity to tour the U.S Marshals Gulf Coast Regional Fugitive Task Force Training Center in Birmingham. This is a task force that brings together the combined expertise of local, state, and national law enforcement agencies.

The task force has contributed to making 3400 arrests since it was formed. The work of the task force in finding and arresting sex offenders is especially impressive. In fact, the work of the task force has been recognized within the U.S. Marshals Service as a model to be replicated in other parts of the country.

This is an issue that is very important to Congress.

In 2006, we passed the Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act, making it a federal offense for sex offenders to fail to register themselves.

We also now have the addition of the National Computer Forensics Institute in Hoover. The institute will provide high-tech training to law enforcement officials in Alabama and across the country that will

help them use computers to solve crimes including those committed by child predators.

Law enforcement receives voluminous amounts of data every day - by the truckload and by the proverbial boatload. Information from 100 hard drives can fill the Library of Congress. The number of devices from which information can be extracted is mushrooming: blackberries, Ipods, X-boxes, GPS devices, and newer versions of cell phones as well as the traditional personal computer.

Through the work of the Institute, our officers will have the knowledge to find, read, analyze, and act on this data.

So the people of Alabama can feel secure that their law enforcement agencies are working together to provide them with the highest level of protection. And through the “A Child Is Missing Program,” citizens can be the “eyes and ears” for the police. Your timely tips and information just might help safely reunite young children with their families and prevent a tragic situation from taking place.

Mayor Oden and Chief Stanley, thank you for bringing this innovative service to Mountain Brook. You are doing the right thing to protect the safety of your citizens and community.

