

Ninety-five Percent of Americans Say They Want an Amber Alert Plan in Their Home State; Polly Klaas Foundation Launches National Campaign Urging Governors To Implement Amber Alerts in Every State of the Union.

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SACRAMENTO, Calif. -- An overwhelming 95 percent of Americans support the implementation of an Amber Alert in their home state, according to a national poll commissioned by the Polly Klaas Foundation, which launched a national campaign today urging governors across the country to adopt alert plans before another child goes missing. A full 88 percent of Americans say they support their governor signing an executive order to implement an Amber Alert in their state.

In letters delivered to the governors of the 30 states that currently do not have Amber Alerts, the Polly Klaas Foundation underscored two teenage girls kidnapped in Los Angeles County last week whose safe recovery was largely credited to California's new Amber Alert plan.

"The lesson we've learned from [California] could not be more clear: The most important thing we can do to safely recover our children from abductors is to have a child abduction alert plan, or Amber Alert, in every state in the union," the letter read.

"There is no excuse for any state to be without a statewide Amber Alert. It requires no legislative action, it is cost-effective and it works," said Jenni Thompson, Director of Public Affairs for the Polly Klaas Foundation. "Why wouldn't we use every tool available to us when a child goes missing?"

Thompson was joined by California Governor Gray Davis, Orange County Sheriff Mike Carona, and Los Angeles County Undersheriff Bill Stonich on a telephone press conference today to release the polling figures and introduce the campaign. Gov. Davis praised the Amber Alert for leading police swiftly to the abductor of the California teenagers.

"In a child abduction case, time is of the essence. The quicker the news gets out about a child, description of the child and his or her abductor, the quicker you can get a good result," said Gov. Davis. "So we're doing something right. We want to improve the system even further, but we're just thrilled with the result."

Earlier this week, Attorney General John Ashcroft also voiced his support for instituting Amber Alerts across the country. "It's a commendable program. About 14 states have it. We'd obviously like to see it more widespread," Ashcroft said on ABC's "Good Morning America."

At the press conference, The Polly Klaas Foundation unveiled key elements of its Amber Alert campaign, which includes:

- An interactive campaign website, www.AmberAlertNow.org, which informs people whether their state has an Amber Alert and enables them to send a letter to their governor via email supporting the alerts.
- Technical assistance to state officials and law enforcement who choose to implement Amber Alerts;
- Individual appeals to governors in states that currently do not have a statewide Amber Alert plan in place.

Child safety advocates liken Amber Alerts to a modern day, high-speed Paul Revere, able to spread the word through TV and radio broadcasts to millions of people during the first crucial hours of a kidnapping when tracks left by the abductor are still fresh. The alerts are named for Amber Hagerman, a nine-year-old girl whose kidnapping and murder led to the creation of the first such system in Dallas.

The states that do not currently have statewide Amber Alerts are:

Alaska	Iowa	Missouri	New Hampshire
Delaware	Kansas	Montana	New Mexico
Hawaii	Kentucky	Nebraska	New York
Idaho	Maryland	Nevada	North Carolina
Indiana	Mississippi		
North Dakota	South Carolina	Virginia	
Ohio	South Dakota	Wisconsin	
Oregon	Tennessee	Wyoming	
Rhode Island	Texas		
	Vermont		

The poll was designed and administered by Lake, Snell, Perry & Associates for the Polly Klaas Foundation. The poll of 1,000 randomly selected adults nationwide was conducted from August 5 through August 7, 2002. The margin of error is plus or minus 3.1%. Detailed polling results will be available at <http://www.amberalertnow.org/> by August 9.

The Polly Klaas Foundation is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization based in Petaluma, CA. Founded in 1993, the Polly Klaas(R) Foundation actively works to protect, nurture and empower children nationwide by educating and training communities in preventing the conditions that directly lead to missing children and by assisting and supporting families of missing and abducted children.

Please note that Marc Klaas is not associated with the Polly Klaas Foundation.

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