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### PENCE PUSHES FOR NATIONAL AMBER ALERT SYSTEM

**Washington, Mar 14, 2003** - WASHINGTON, DC - U.S. Congressman Mike Pence, a member of the House Judiciary Committee, pushed for the establishment of a national Amber Alert system at a press conference with House Judiciary Chairman James Sensenbrenner.

"With the wonderful news that Elizabeth Smart was found alive, I, like most parents across the country, watched the pictures of her on my television and thought about my three young children," said Pence. "I have watched many similar images over the past few years and each time I think to myself that I cannot imagine the horror I would feel if any of them were missing or kidnapped.

"One of the missions of government is to protect the citizens of this great country," said Pence. "It therefore only makes sense to do all we can to protect those who so often cannot help themselves.

"That is why today I am working with the chairman of the Judiciary Committee to help push through the 'Child Abduction Prevention Act.' This bill provides sound protection our children deserve," said Pence.

The "Child Abduction Prevention Act" will:

- Establish an AMBER Alert Coordinator with the Department of Justice to assist states with their AMBER Alert plans
- The AMBER program is a voluntary partnership between law-enforcement agencies and broadcasters to activate an urgent alert bulletin in serious child-abduction cases. The goal of the AMBER Alert is to instantly galvanize the entire community to assist in the search for and safe return of the child.
- Requires the Department of Justice Coordinator to establish nationwide minimum standards for the issuance of an AMBER alert and the extent of dissemination of the alert. The legislation allows for voluntary adoption of these standards. The Committee intends that the establishment of minimum standards will limit the use of the system to those rare instances of serious child abductions. Limiting the use of AMBER Alerts is critical to the long-term success of the program because overuse or misuse of AMBER Alerts could lead to public fatigue or numbness to the alerts.
- Authorizes \$5 million for FY 2003 for the Attorney General to administer a grant program for the development and enhancement of programs and activities for the support of AMBER Alert communication plans.

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