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OAKLAND

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CITY ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

OAKLAND CITY COUNCIL

RESOLUTION NO. 89747 C.M.S.

INTRODUCED BY COUNCILMEMBER TREVA REID

RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF CALIFORNIA SENATE BILL 673 (BRADFORD), WHICH WOULD ESTABLISH AN "EBONY ALERT" TO HELP LOCATE MISSING BLACK YOUTH AND BLACK WOMEN

WHEREAS, Existing law requires a law enforcement agency to activate the Emergency Alert System within the appropriate area if that agency determines that a child 17 years of age or younger, or an individual with a proven mental or physical disability, has been abducted and is in imminent danger of serious bodily injury or death, and there is information available that, if disseminated to the general public, could assist in the safe recovery of that person; and

WHEREAS, The first alert system developed in California was the "AMBER Alert," which authorized law enforcement agencies to use digital messaging on overhead roadway signs to assist in recovery efforts for child abduction cases. As of December 2020, the AMBER Alert system had successfully assisted in the rescue of 1,029 kidnapped children; and

WHEREAS, Existing state law also authorizes the issuance and coordination of a "Silver Alert" relating to a person who is 65 years of age or older, developmentally disabled, or cognitively impaired who is reported missing, and a "Feather Alert" relating to an endangered indigenous person who has been reported missing under unexplained or suspicious circumstances; and

WHEREAS, Senate Bill 673, introduced by State Senator Steven Bradford, would authorize a law enforcement agency to request the Department of the California Highway Patrol to activate an "Ebony Alert," with respect to Black youth, including young women and girls, who are reported missing under unexplained or suspicious circumstances; and

WHEREAS, The bill would require the department to activate an Ebony Alert within the appropriate geographical area requested by the investigating law enforcement agency and to assist the agency by disseminating specified alert messages and signs, if the department concurs with the agency that an Ebony Alert would be an effective tool in the investigation of a missing person according to specified factors; and

WHEREAS, According to data from the 2019 United States Census, people who are Black or African American make up 13.4% of the United States population. However, nearly 40% percent of missing persons are people of color; and

WHEREAS, Black youth 18 years of age or under make up 38 percent of missing person cases and Black children make up about 33 percent of all missing child cases and receive less media attention to the fact that they are missing; and

WHEREAS, In 2022, there were 62,200 reports of missing children in California, and 34,389 were female. In Alameda County, 1,873 reports of missing children were filed in 2022. Of the 1,500 missing person reports in 2022 in the City of Oakland, over 400 were Black women; and

WHEREAS, In addition to making up a disproportionate percentage of all missing people, Black women, and girls are at increased risk of being harmed. The Congressional Black Caucus Foundation found in a two-year study of human trafficking incidents across the country that 40 percent of sex trafficking victims were identified as Black women; and

WHEREAS, When a missing child is listed as a runaway, they receive no media coverage, and less police and government resources are available for their recovery; and

WHEREAS, Black missing children are disproportionately classified as "runaways" in comparison to their white counterparts and do not receive the AMBER Alert, which ultimately means that fewer resources are allotted to the safe return of Black children; and

WHEREAS, The Legislature intends to provide law enforcement with additional tools to disseminate timely, accurate information to engage the public and the media to more effectively assist with locating missing Black children and young women that are disproportionately missing in California; and

WHEREAS, Radio, television, cable, satellite, and social media systems are encouraged to, but not required to, cooperate with disseminating the information contained in an Ebony Alert; and

WHEREAS, Upon activation of an Ebony Alert, the Department of the California Highway Patrol shall assist the investigating law enforcement agency by issuing a be-on-the-lookout alert, an electronic flyer, or changeable message signs; and

WHEREAS, Too many Black youth and women go missing, are ignored, are misclassified as runways, labeled as criminals or group/gang-affiliated, and are not included in Amber alerts with the action and attention needed to bring them home safely; and

WHEREAS, It is critical that the cases of Black women and youth are granted the enforcement tools, community resources, and media attention needed when they are missing at disproportionate rates in the US and across our state; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED: That the City Council directs the City Administrator or his designee to immediately distribute this Resolution in support of Senate Bill 673 upon its adoption to Governor Gavin Newsom and State Senator Bradford.

IN COUNCIL, OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA, MAY 30 2023

PASSED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

AYES - FIFE, GALLO, JENKINS, KALB, KAPLAN, RAMACHANDRAN, REID, AND PRESIDENT FORTUNATO BAS — 8
NOES – 0
ABSENT – 0
ABSTENTION – 0

ATTEST: _____
ASHA REED
City Clerk and Clerk of the Council of the
City of Oakland, California

3273016v1 / SW