

Regarding Protections for At-Risk Missing Adults

My name is **Rebecca Russell**, and I am writing as a mother who lived through four days of unimaginable fear. My daughter, Kaylee, went missing—the delays and barriers we encountered are the reason I am standing before you now. No family should ever face what we did.

On the evening of November 30, I felt a sudden and overwhelming sense of panic. Parents know their children, and I knew something was wrong. I called Kaylee numerous times and then reached out to her father who drove through the cold, snowy night searching for her, but there was no sign of her. We hoped she was annoyed at us checking on her again.

By the next morning, when she didn't show up for work, something completely out of character, I contacted law enforcement and filed a missing person report. From that moment forward, we were thrust into a nightmare.

On Dec 1st while we waited for official action, family and friends took to the streets, to Facebook, making flyers—doing the work no family should have to do alone. Precious hours were lost, and we received no meaningful guidance from those we relied on for help.

Desperate, on December 2nd I reached out to Senator Marchman. She responded with urgency and compassion. She advised us to request an “at-risk missing adult” alert which would classify her as at risk based on behavior out of character and life-threatening situation.

But when I asked Evans Police for this alert, I was told it could not be issued because Kaylee was **20 years old**. No alternatives. No suggestions. Silence.

It took Senator Marchman personally contacting the Chief of Police for Kaylee to finally receive the classification she urgently needed.

For four days we lived in terror—searching, pleading for help, and hearing dismissive comments that she “didn't want to be found” or had “just taken off because of her age.” Meanwhile, she was outside in freezing temperatures. When she was finally located, she didn't even look like herself.

Kaylee would never disappear by choice, especially after the loss of her brother in March 2023. She knew how deeply I worried. We spoke daily and would tell me I was her best friend.

I am telling you this because the system in its current form **fails** young adults and the families who love them. Time is everything. And rigid age limits, inconsistent protocols, and a lack of guidance cost families the very hours that could save a life.

I am urging lawmakers to create **faster, clearer, and more compassionate protocols for at-risk missing young adults**, including:

- Flexible criteria that prioritize safety over age
- Streamlined processes for issuing alerts
- Mandatory guidance for families in crisis
- Urgency in cases where behavior is clearly out of character

How someone becomes at risk should not matter—only that they *are* at risk. An alert system can mean the difference between life and death.

No parent should have to fight this hard to protect their child.

I am asking you to help us fix this.

Thank you.