

November 29, 2005

Noujaim to Introduce Missing Persons Day Bill

Waterbury Legislator Hopes to Bring Awareness to Missing Persons Cases

HARTFORD- State Representative Selim Noujaim (R-Waterbury) today announced that he would introduce legislation in the 2006 Regular Session of the Connecticut General Assembly which would have the governor designate August 24th of each year as Missing Person's Day in the State of Connecticut. The proposed bill aims at raising awareness of the plight of state citizens who have been reported missing. The bill also asks the governor to conduct suitable exercises in the State Capitol or elsewhere as the Governor designates for the observance of that day.

Noujaim says that he was encouraged to introduce the legislation after conferring with friends and family of William Smolinski, Jr., a 32-year-old Waterbury native who has been missing since August 24, 2004.

"The people of Waterbury are very familiar with the sad circumstances surrounding the disappearance of Billy Smolinski," said Rep. Noujaim. "Every year in Connecticut between 200 and 300 juveniles are reported missing, including runaways and stranger abductions. This doesn't even take into consideration missing adults. I want to bring attention to the plight of those missing people, and the families and friends they leave behind who are tortured by not knowing the whereabouts or fate of those missing individuals."

Dawn Breen, a friend of Billy Smolinski who worked at Durable Towing with him, said she was pleased that the legislation would be introduced, and hoped it brought particular attention to adult missing person's cases. "Missing adults get little attention compared to missing children," said Breen. "I am hoping that a Missing Person's Day will also raise awareness for adult missing person's cases."

"We strongly feel having a Missing Person's Day can help bring recognition to a serious problem that the public in general does not realize unless it is brought to their attention," said William and Janice Smolinski, parents of Billy Smolinski. "It is important to bring awareness that every missing person has a story in every age group; male, female, young and old. They all need to have their story told. Unfortunately the adult male group seems to be ignored. We are working so hard not only to find our Billy but to get this matter of the missing out one person at a time."

The legislature convenes again in February of 2006 in Regular Session.