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HARTFORD- THE STATE VICTIM ADVOCATE HIGHLIGHTS CONNECTICUT'S MISSING PERSON'S DAY

The Office of the Victim Advocate (OVA) commends the General Assembly and the Governor for declaring August 23, 2011 Missing Person's Day in Connecticut. Missing Person's Day is a day to acknowledge the staggering number of individuals who have gone missing and to stand together as a community and our continued commitment to strengthen our state's responsiveness to missing persons. Through the work of Jan Smolinski and her family in the aftermath of their adult son Billy's sudden disappearance and the experiences they encountered, the state's responsiveness to missing persons and missing adults has been improved and those efforts continue, including on the federal level through Congressman Christopher Murphy.

Many family members of missing persons mistakenly assume they must wait 24 hours to report their loved one missing. It has been proven over and over again that time lost due to delayed investigation of a missing person results in loss of evidence, witness statements or other critical information. The message from the OVA to families and friends of those who may go missing is, "You don't have to wait 24 hours to report. As a mother, father, sister, brother, cousin, or friend, you know when something is not right." Cruz continued, "Our message to the law enforcement communities is to listen. The family knows the habits and patterns of their loved ones. And, therefore, they know when something's gone wrong- take these reports seriously."

One only has to hear Jan Smolinski's story about Billy to know we are correct. It will be seven years since Billy Smolinski went missing on August 24, 2004 – The Smolinski's are still waiting to bring Billy home.

For more information about missing persons, visit the OVA's website: www.ct.gov/ova.

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