

WASHINGTON – Today, on National Missing Children’s Day, Rep. Pete Stark (D-CA) announced introduction of bipartisan legislation, the Recovering Missing Children Act along with Rep. Erik Paulsen (R-MN), Rep. Joe Courtney (D-CT), and Rep. Pat Tiberi (R-OH) at a press conference. Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), who has similar legislation, spoke in support, as did advocates and a parent who experienced the abduction of a child.

Each year, 200,000 children are abducted by a family member. Research by the U.S. Treasury Department of 1,700 parental abductions found that in more than one third of the cases, tax returns were filed using the missing child’s Social Security number. Hundreds of those tax returns had a new address for the child and the abductor. Yet law enforcement does not have access to this basic information, which could be vital to locating abducted children.

Rep. Pete Stark (D-CA): “Information that could help bring an abducted child home is sitting right under our noses, yet we don’t empower law enforcement to use it. We need a system that grants access to the authorities working on a particular abduction case while also respecting and protecting tax filers’ privacy. The Recovering Missing Children Act strikes that important balance.”

The Recovering Missing Children Act would amend the Internal Revenue Code, adding the case of a missing child to the current list of exceptions that allow the release of IRS tax return information. To ensure that taxpayers’ rights to privacy are protected, the legislation requires a federal court order for information from tax forms to be released. The release of such information would be limited to federal, state and local law enforcement agents who are personally and directly involved in the investigation of a missing child. [The National Sheriffs Association](#) has endorsed the legislation and the [Association of Missing and Exploited Children’s Organizations](#) has also endorsed the legislation.

Sen. Klobuchar (D-MN): “As a former prosecutor, I know that one of law enforcement’s highest priorities is working to recover missing children. This is a commonsense way to cut red tape and provide police and prosecutors access to critical information that would help bring missing children home.”

In March, Klobuchar chaired a Senate Judiciary Committee hearing examining ways to help law enforcement in their search for missing children. At the hearing, Klobuchar renewed her call to pass her legislation, the Access to Information about Missing Children Act, which would help federal, state, and local law enforcement locate missing children whose whereabouts could be discovered through basic information on federal tax returns. Experts from the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children testified at the hearing.