

MICHIGAN BLUE ALERT ACT

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Senate Bill 336 as passed by the Senate
Sponsor: Sen. Tonya Schuitmaker
House Committee: Criminal Justice
Senate Committee: Judiciary
Complete to 9-28-15

Analysis available at
<http://www.legislature.mi.gov>

SUMMARY:

Briefly, Senate Bill 336 creates the Michigan Blue Alert Act to require establishment of the Michigan Blue Alert Plan—a plan designed to rapidly disseminate information to radio and television stations within the state regarding an offender who has killed or seriously injured a law enforcement officer (and presumably, who has not yet been apprehended).

Under the bill, the Michigan Department of State Police (MSP) would be required to establish and maintain the Michigan Blue Alert Plan. The Plan must be designed to rapidly disseminate useful information in a predetermined manner to radio and television stations within the state. A Michigan Blue Alert would only be activated in accordance with policies established by MSP and if all of the following conditions apply:

- ❖ A law enforcement officer has been killed or seriously injured by an offender.
- ❖ The investigating law enforcement agency determines that the offender poses a serious risk or threat to the public and other law enforcement personnel.
- ❖ The investigating law enforcement agency has obtained and can provide a detailed description of the offender's vehicle, vehicle registration plate numbers or letters, or partial registration plate numbers or letters to be made available for broadcast to the public.
- ❖ The investigating law enforcement agency recommends that MSP activate the Blue Alert.

The bill would take effect 90 days after enactment.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

On May 19, 2015, President Obama signed the Rafael Ramos and Wenjian Liu National Blue Alert Act into law. Ramos and Liu were detectives with the New York City Police Department who were shot and killed while sitting in their patrol car in December of 2014. The federal act requires the Attorney General to establish a national Blue Alert communications network within the federal Department of Justice to issue Blue Alerts through the initiation, facilitation, and promotion of Blue Alert plans, in coordination with states, units of local government, law enforcement agencies, and other appropriate entities.

To date, 24 states have currently established Blue Alert systems, with legislation pending in several more states, according to the Blue Alert Foundation, a nonprofit entity which

developed the Blue Alert system to aid law enforcement agencies in apprehending violent individuals who kill or seriously injure local, state, or federal law enforcement officers. The systems use media broadcasts and highway messaging signs to quickly provide the public with information identifying the offender and, if relevant, the offender's vehicle. Some states also disseminate Blue Alerts via email and text messages in the same manner as Amber Alerts.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Senate Bill 336, as passed by the Senate, would have a significant fiscal impact on the Department of State Police (MSP) to the extent that MSP would encounter costs to develop and maintain the Blue Alert system. MSP estimates that such costs would include \$10,000 to develop information technology systems, \$10,000 for server storage, and \$300 per month to operate the Plan in partnership with the Michigan Association of Broadcasters.

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■ This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan House Fiscal Agency staff for use by House members in their deliberations, and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.