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BILL



ANALYSIS

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Senate Bill 336 (as enacted)
Sponsor: Senator Tonya Schuitmaker
Senate Committee: Judiciary
House Committee: Criminal Justice

PUBLIC ACT 167 of 2015

Date Completed: 12-10-15

CONTENT

The bill creates the "Michigan Blue Alert Act" to require the Michigan Department of State Police (MSP) to establish and maintain the Michigan Blue Alert Plan to disseminate information to radio and television stations when a law enforcement officer is killed or seriously injured and the investigating agency has identified a suspect.

The Michigan Blue Alert Plan must be designed to rapidly disseminate useful information in a predetermined manner to radio and television stations within Michigan.

A Michigan Blue Alert may be activated only in accordance with policies that the MSP establishes and if all of the following apply:

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

The bill will take effect on February 1, 2016.

BACKGROUND

On May 19, 2015, President Obama signed into law the Rafael Ramos and Wenjian Liu National Blue Alert Act. The Federal law is designed to encourage, enhance, and integrate Blue Alert plans throughout the United States. It requires the U.S. Attorney General to "establish a national Blue Alert communications network within the 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".

The Department of Justice's Blue Alert Coordinator must establish voluntary guidelines for states and local units to use in developing Blue Alert plans to promote compatible and integrated plans throughout the country. The coordinator also must develop protocols for efforts to apprehend suspects and establish an advisory group to assist states, local units, law enforcement agencies, and other entities involved in the Blue Alert communications network. Participation in the Blue Alert communications network is voluntary and the Federal

Act specifies that guidelines, protocols, and other programs established under it are not mandatory.

According to its website, the Blue Alert Foundation, Inc. is working to develop a nationwide Blue Alert system, based upon the success of the Amber Alert system for missing children and the Silver Alert system for missing senior citizens. Reportedly, 24 other states have adopted Blue Alert systems and several others are considering Blue Alert legislation.

Legislative Analyst: Patrick Affholter

FISCAL IMPACT

The bill will have a minimal fiscal impact on the Department of State Police. Responsibilities such as the development and maintenance of the Blue Alert system and adjustments to information and technology systems will have essentially a neutral fiscal impact on the MSP's Special Operations Division and will be assumed within existing resources, according to the Department.

Fiscal Analyst: Bruce Baker