



Delaware House of Representatives House Majority Caucus

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GOVERNOR SIGNS 'BLUE ALERT' BILL INTO LAW

Schooley bill will help in capture of those who hurt or kill law enforcement officers

NEWARK – Legislation creating an alert system to aid in the capture of offenders who kill or seriously injure a law enforcement officer was signed into law on Thursday.

Governor Jack A. Markell signed House Bill 448 at Delaware State Police Troop 2 with dozens of law enforcement officers from around the state present. Police hailed the bill as a critical key in catching serious criminals who choose to harm those sworn to protect the public.

“This bill is about protecting those who protect us,” Governor Markell said. “The goal is to provide people with information about a dangerous person and their possible whereabouts. The hope is that the public becomes the eyes and ears of law enforcement and can help with information so police can quickly catch their criminal.”

Sponsored by Rep. Teresa L. “Terry” Schooley, D-Newark, House Bill 448 creates a “Blue Alert” program, which is modeled after similar programs in other states and after Delaware’s “Gold Alert” program, which is used to identify certain missing persons.

Delaware is the seventh state to create a Blue Alert system. Florida, Texas, Oklahoma, Alabama, Maryland and Georgia have enacted similar programs.

“Law enforcement officers put their lives on the line every time they put on the uniform,” Rep. Schooley said. “They put themselves in harm’s way to protect us and keep us safe. When someone seriously hurts or kills an officer, we must do everything to get that person off the streets and bring them to justice as quickly as possible.

“I am happy to help create this system. I just hope that we never have to use it.”

Under HB 448, the Blue Alert program would be activated when a suspect in the death or serious injury of a law enforcement officer has not been caught and might be a serious threat to the

public. The investigating law enforcement agency would send an alert to media outlets and send descriptive information to the Delaware Criminal Justice Information System (DELJIS) and the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) and notify the Delaware Information Analysis Center (DIAC).

The alert would terminate when the suspect is located or the incident is otherwise resolved.

“People who would perpetrate serious harm against our Police represent the worst possible offenders and the greatest threat against society,” said Secretary of Safety and Homeland Security Lewis Schiliro. “The Blue Alert provides a valuable tool to apprehend them as quickly as possible.”

Thursday’s signing comes nearly one year after the September 2009 killing of Georgetown Police Officer Chad Spicer, who was fatally shot when he and his partner stopped a vehicle that had been involved in another shooting earlier that evening.

Newport Police Chief Michael Capriglione, who is president of the Delaware Police Chiefs Council, said that Officer Spicer’s death brought the law enforcement community together and helped them realize how such a tragedy touches all agencies throughout the state.

“This is a great day for law enforcement,” Chief Capriglione said. “If a police officer is assaulted or killed in the line of duty, we are counting on the public to help us apprehend the suspect and bring them to justice. This shows that the state of Delaware is serious about protecting those who are sworn to protect the public.”

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