

NATIONAL BLUE ALERT ACT OF 2013

MAY 14, 2013.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union and ordered to be printed

Mr. GOODLATTE, from the Committee on the Judiciary, submitted the following

R E P O R T

[To accompany H.R. 180]

[Including cost estimate of the Congressional Budget Office]

The Committee on the Judiciary, to whom was referred the bill (H.R. 180) to encourage, enhance, and integrate Blue Alert plans throughout the United States in order to disseminate information when a law enforcement officer is seriously injured or killed in the line of duty, having considered the same, reports favorably thereon without amendment and recommends that the bill do pass.

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**Purpose and Summary**

H.R. 180 directs the formation of a national Blue Alert communications network within the Department of Justice (DOJ) to disseminate information when a law enforcement officer is seriously injured or killed in the line of duty and a suspect has not been ap-

prehended. An existing DOJ officer shall act as the national coordinator of the Blue Alert communications network who shall 1) encourage states and local governments to develop additional Blue Alert plans, 2) establish voluntary guidelines for states and local governments to use in developing such plans, 3) develop protocols for efforts to apprehend suspects, and 4) establish an advisory group to assist states, local governments, law enforcement agencies, and other entities in initiating, facilitating, and promoting Blue Alert plans.

### **Background and Need for the Legislation**

This bill would encourage and enhance an integrated Blue Alert communications network throughout the United States in order to disseminate information and speed apprehension of violent criminals when a law enforcement officer is seriously injured or killed in the line of duty. Blue Alerts would use the same infrastructure as Amber Alerts (missing children) and Silver Alerts (missing seniors).

Each year, hundreds of law enforcement officers are killed or seriously injured in the line of duty. Despite this, law enforcement officers put their lives on the line every day, working long and irregular hours in stressful and dangerous conditions. Since 1791, over 19,000 law enforcement officers have been killed in the line of duty in the United States.

The Blue Alert system is a cooperative effort among local, state and Federal authorities, law enforcement agencies and the general public. A Blue Alert provides a description of an offender who is still at large and may include a description of the offender's vehicle and license plate information.

The bill directs the Department of Justice to designate a Blue Alert national coordinator who will encourage states that have not already done so to develop Blue Alert plans and establish voluntary guidelines.

Like Amber Alerts, Blue Alerts help hinder the offender's ability to flee and will facilitate a speedy capture. Blue Alerts also help to eliminate the grave threat which each offender poses to the general public and to law enforcement personnel.

Eighteen states currently have Blue Alert networks in place. At least six more states are considering Blue Alert networks and/or have legislation pending.

### **Hearings**

The Committee on the Judiciary held no hearings on H.R. 180.

### **Committee Consideration**

On May 7, 2013, the Committee met in open session and ordered the bill H.R. 180 favorably reported without amendment, by voice vote, a quorum being present.

### **Committee Votes**

In compliance with clause 3(b) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee advises that there were

no recorded votes during the Committee's consideration of H.R. 180.

### **Committee Oversight Findings**

In compliance with clause 3(c)(1) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee advises that the findings and recommendations of the Committee, based on oversight activities under clause 2(b)(1) of rule X of the Rules of the House of Representatives, are incorporated in the descriptive portions of this report.

### **New Budget Authority and Tax Expenditures**

Clause 3(c)(2) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives is inapplicable because this legislation does not provide new budgetary authority or increased tax expenditures.

### **Congressional Budget Office Cost Estimate**

In compliance with clause 3(c)(3) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee sets forth, with respect to the bill, H.R. 180, the following estimate and comparison prepared by the Director of the Congressional Budget Office under section 402 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974:

U.S. CONGRESS,  
CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE,  
*Washington, DC, May 9, 2013.*

Hon. BOB GOODLATTE, CHAIRMAN,  
*Committee on the Judiciary,*  
*House of Representatives, Washington, DC.*

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: The Congressional Budget Office has prepared the enclosed cost estimate for H.R. 180, the "National Blue Alert Act of 2013."

If you wish further details on this estimate, we will be pleased to provide them. The CBO staff contact is Mark Grabowicz, who can be reached at 226-2860.

Sincerely,

DOUGLAS W. ELMENDORF,  
DIRECTOR.

Enclosure

cc: Honorable John Conyers, Jr.  
Ranking Member

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### **H.R. 180—National Blue Alert Act of 2013.**

As ordered reported by the House Committee on the Judiciary  
on May 7, 2013.

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H.R. 180 would require the Department of Justice (DOJ) to establish and promote a national communications network to issue alerts (that would be known as "blue alerts") when a law enforcement officer is killed or seriously injured. Under the bill's provisions, the department would develop guidelines and protocols for

State and local governments that participate in the program and provide assistance as necessary to those participants.

Based on the costs of similar activities, CBO estimates that it would cost about \$1 million annually from appropriated funds for DOJ to establish and administer the new program. Enacting the legislation would not affect direct spending or revenues; therefore, pay-as-you-go procedures do not apply.

H.R. 180 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act and would impose no costs on State, local, or tribal governments.

The CBO staff contact for this estimate is Mark Grabowicz. The estimate was approved by Theresa Gullo, Deputy Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.

### **Duplication of Federal Programs**

No provision of H.R. 180 establishes or reauthorizes a program of the Federal Government known to be duplicative of another Federal program, a program that was included in any report from the Government Accountability Office to Congress pursuant to section 21 of Public Law 111–139, or a program related to a program identified in the most recent Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance.

### **Disclosure of Directed Rule Makings**

The Committee estimates that H.R. 180 specifically directs to be completed no specific rule makings within the meaning of 5 U.S.C. 551.

### **Performance Goals and Objectives**

The Committee states that pursuant to clause 3(c)(4) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, H.R. 180 will encourage and enhance an integrated Blue Alert communications network throughout the United States in order to disseminate information and speed apprehension of violent criminals when a law enforcement officer is seriously injured or killed in the line of duty.

### **Advisory on Earmarks**

In accordance with clause 9 of rule XXI of the Rules of the House of Representatives, H.R. 180 does not contain any congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits as defined in clause 9(e), 9(f), or 9(g) of Rule XXI.

### **Section-by-Section Analysis**

The following discussion describes the bill as reported by the Committee.

#### *Sec. 1: Short Title*

Section 1 provides that the short title of H.R. 180 is the “National Blue Alert Act of 2013.”

#### *Sec. 2: Definitions*

Section 2 defines certain terms as used in the bill.

*Sec. 3: Blue Alert Communications Network*

Section 3 directs the Attorney General to establish a national Blue Alert communications network within the Department of Justice by initiating, facilitating and promoting Blue Alert plans with state and local governments and law enforcement agencies.

*Sec. 4: Blue Alert Coordinator; Guidelines*

Section 4 requires the Attorney General to assign an *existing* officer of the Department of Justice to act as the national coordinator of the Blue Alert communications network. The Section also sets forth the coordinator's duties and limitations. It also restricts the coordinator's ability to travel and hold conferences solely for Blue Alert network purposes.