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## [S. 665, Rafael Ramos and Wenjian Liu National Blue Alert Act of 2015](#)

### FLOOR SITUATION

On Tuesday, May 12, 2015, the House will consider [S. 665](#), *the Rafael Ramos and Wenjian Liu National Blue Alert Act of 2015*, under suspension of the rules. S. 665 was introduced on March 4, 2015, by Senator Ben Cardin (D-MD) and was approved by the Senate by voice vote on April 30, 2015.

### SUMMARY

S. 665 requires the Attorney General to establish a national Blue Alert communications network within the Department of Justice (DOJ) to disseminate information among Federal, State and local governments, and law enforcement agencies, when a law enforcement officer: is seriously injured or killed in the line of duty; is missing in connection with the officer's official duties; or, there exists an imminent and credible threat that an individual intends to cause the serious injury or death of a law enforcement officer.

The bill directs the Attorney General to assign an existing DOJ officer to act as the national coordinator of the network. The Coordinator will provide assistance to state and local governments that are using Blue Alert plans and establish voluntary guidelines to promote their compatibility and integration throughout the country, including standards for issuing a Blue Alert and protocols for efforts to apprehend suspects. The bill also requires the Coordinator to establish an advisory group to assist governments and law enforcement agencies in initiating, facilitating and promoting their Blue Alert plans.

Further, S. 665 prohibits the Coordinator from: performing any official travel solely for carrying out his or her duties as Coordinator; lobbying any officer of a State regarding funding or implementation of a Blue Alert plan; or, hosting a conference focused solely on the Blue Alert program that requires the expenditure of Federal funds.

Finally, the bill requires the Coordinator, not later than one year after enactment, and annually thereafter, to submit to Congress a report on the activities of the Coordinator and the effectiveness and status of the Blue Alert plans that are in effect or are being developed.

## BACKGROUND

Each year, hundreds of law enforcement officers are killed or seriously injured in the line of duty. Despite this danger, law enforcement officers put their lives on the line every day, working long and irregular hours in stressful and dangerous conditions. Since 1791, more than 19,000 law enforcement officers have been killed in the line of duty in the United States.<sup>1</sup> There have been 40 line-of-duty deaths so far in 2015.<sup>2</sup>

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 a suspect who is still at-large and may include a description of the suspect's vehicle and license plate information. Similar to Amber Alerts, Blue Alerts help hinder the offender's ability to flee and facilitate a speedy capture.<sup>3</sup> According to the Blue Alert Foundation, 22 states currently have Blue Alert networks in place, while numerous other states are considering such a system.<sup>4</sup>

In the 113<sup>th</sup> Congress, the House passed a similar bill ([H.R. 180](#)) by a vote of [406 to 2](#) on May 14, 2013.

## COST

The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) [estimates](#) that enacting S. 665 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.

## STAFF CONTACT

For questions or further information please contact [Jerry White](#) with the House Republican Policy Committee by email or at 5-0190.

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<sup>1</sup> [House Report 113-54](#) at 2.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.odmp.org/search/year>

<sup>3</sup> [House Report 113-54](#) at 2.

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.bluealert.us/about\\_us](http://www.bluealert.us/about_us)