

1 **Senate Bill No. 551**

2 (By Senators Laird, Unger and Beach)

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4 [Introduced February 12, 2014; referred to the Committee on
5 Government Organization.]

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10 A BILL to amend the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, by
11 adding thereto a new section, designated §8-14-3a, relating to
12 requiring municipal law-enforcement officers to wear certain
13 armored vests when feasible; and requiring municipal police
14 chiefs to create a policy regarding the mandatory use of
15 certain armored vests.

16 *Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:*

17 That the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, be amended
18 by adding thereto a new section, designated §8-14-3a, to read as
19 follows:

20 **ARTICLE 14. LAW AND ORDER; POLICE FORCE OR DEPARTMENTS; POWERS,**
21 **AUTHORITY AND DUTIES OF LAW-ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS**
22 **AND POLICEMEN; POLICE MATRONS; SPECIAL SCHOOL ZONE**

1 **AND PARKING LOT OR PARKING BUILDING POLICE**
2 **OFFICERS; CIVIL SERVICE FOR CERTAIN POLICE**
3 **DEPARTMENTS.**

4 **§8-14-3a. Mandatory armored vest wear policy requirement.**

5 Every police force or department of a municipality shall adopt
6 a formal policy by January 1, 2015, that requires all
7 law-enforcement officers in their police force or department to
8 wear an armor vest throughout each duty shift whenever feasible.
9 The terms and exemptions of this mandatory wear policy shall be
10 determined by each chief of police in the reasonable exercise of
11 his or her discretion: *Provided*, That the policy must define an
12 "armor vest" as a vest that has met the performance standards
13 established by the National Law-Enforcement and Corrections
14 Technology Center of the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) as
15 published in NIJ Standard 0101.03, or any formal revision of this
16 standard.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to require West Virginia
municipal police officers to wear armored vests whenever feasible.

§8-14-3a is new; therefore, strike-throughs and underscoring
have been omitted.