

**Statement of Senator Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.),  
Ranking Member, Senate Judiciary Committee,  
Executive Business Meeting  
March 26, 2015**

Today the Committee is turning to two important bills to support the brave men and women who keep our communities safe. I thank Chairman Grassley for listing both the National Blue Alert Act and the Bulletproof Vest Partnership Grant Program Reauthorization Act. I also want to recognize and thank Senator Graham for being the lead Republican cosponsor of both bills. Protecting law enforcement should not be a partisan issue.

Our Nation needs no additional reminders of the dangers faced by law enforcement. The bulletproof vest program protects our officers, providing nearly 1.2 million of them with life-saving vests since 1998. In Vermont, nearly 4400 vests have been purchased through this program. The bill before us provides a five year reauthorization for the program and contains a number of improvements, such as Senator Feinstein's request to provide a grant incentive for agencies to provide uniquely fitted vests for female officers and others. I have met many police officers who are living today because of a bulletproof vest, and they will attest to the fact that the vests provided through this program are worth every penny.

With the Budget Committee Chairman signaling that programs with expired authorizations may face the chopping block, it is imperative that we get this bulletproof vest bill reauthorized now. Unfortunately my efforts last Congress were blocked by a single Republican Senator. This year, I am hopeful that these bills to protect those who protect us can be reported today, and pass the Senate without further delay.

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