



## OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

### NEWS RELEASE

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## GOV. WHITMAN SIGNS LEGISLATION TO PROVIDE REPLACEMENT CORRECTIVE VESTS FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT AND CORRECTIONS OFFICERS

Gov. Whitman today signed legislation that establishes a "Body Armor Replacement" fund which will provide grants to replace protective bulletproof body vests to protect local law enforcement officers, State Police and State Corrections officers.

"Law enforcement officials and corrections officers perform one of the most difficult jobs, often involving a great amount of danger," said Gov. Whitman. "They are a special breed. They risk their safety and their lives to protect the public, protect our neighborhoods and families. I am fully committed protecting their safety."

The fund will provide replacement grants every five years, based on the average life of a protective vest. The fund will be supported by the imposition of a one dollar increase on all violations of motor vehicle traffic laws. Additionally, upon the forfeiture of bail, one dollar of the forfeiture of the bail will go toward that fund. It is anticipated that these surcharges will generate between \$2.6 and \$3.5 million per year. The bill will take effect on September 2.

This action follows yesterday's announcement by Gov. Whitman that the state is immediately purchasing protective vests for all 6,500 corrections officers in the state at an estimated cost of \$2.6 million. New Jersey is the first state in the country to provide vests for all of its corrections officers.

The legislation, A-1856, was sponsored by Assembly members Francis Blee (R-Atlantic) and Tom Smith (R-Monmouth) and Senators Peter Inverso (R-Mercer/Middlesex) and James Cafiero (R-Cape May/Atlantic/Cumberland).

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