

SENATE, No. 3147

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
222nd LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2026 SESSION

Sponsored by:
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District 22 (Somerset and Union)
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SYNOPSIS

Prohibits possession and requires registration of body armor in certain circumstances.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

Introduced Pending Technical Review by Legislative Counsel.



1 AN ACT concerning body armor, amending P.L.1983, c.152, and
2 supplementing Title 2C of the New Jersey Statutes.

3
4 **BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State
5 of New Jersey:

6
7 1. (New section) a. It shall be unlawful for a person to own or
8 otherwise possess body armor unless the person has registered the
9 body armor in accordance with subsection b. or e. of this section.

10 b. The Attorney General shall establish a registration process
11 for body armor owned prior to the effective date of
12 P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill). A
13 person who owned body armor prior to the effective date of
14 P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill)
15 shall, within 90 days of the effective date of P.L. , c. (C.)
16 (pending before the Legislature as this bill), register each piece of
17 body armor in compliance with the registration process established
18 pursuant to this subsection.

19 c. The Attorney General shall establish good cause eligibility
20 criteria for persons permitted to purchase or otherwise take
21 possession of body armor on or after the effective date of
22 P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill).
23 Eligible persons shall include law enforcement officers; law
24 enforcement officers who retired in good standing; persons engaged
25 in active duty military service; persons whose duties of employment
26 expose them to serious bodily injury that may be prevented or
27 mitigated by the use of body armor, as determined by the Attorney
28 General; bona fide dealers of body armor; and any other persons
29 meeting the good cause eligibility criteria established by the
30 Attorney General.

31 d. (1) The Attorney General shall establish a permit to
32 purchase body armor and an application process for a person to
33 obtain the permit. On or after the effective date of
34 P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill), it
35 shall be unlawful to purchase or otherwise take possession of body
36 armor unless a person has first secured a permit to purchase body
37 armor.

38 (2) A person shall submit an application for a permit to purchase
39 body armor to the Attorney General on forms prescribed by the
40 Attorney General. The application shall include, but need not be
41 limited to, an applicant's: name; date of birth; street and mailing
42 address; telephone number; email address; and proof that the
43 applicant meets the eligibility criteria established pursuant to
44 subsection c. of this section.

EXPLANATION – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets **[thus]** in the above bill is
not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined thus is new matter.

1 (3) A permit to purchase body armor shall remain in effect for
2 30 days following the date of issuance.

3 (4) A person shall not sell, give, transfer, assign or otherwise
4 dispose of body armor to a person unless the person purchasing or
5 otherwise taking possession of the body armor has first secured a
6 permit to purchase body armor as provided in this subsection, and
7 displays the permit to the seller.

8 e. (1) Following the sale or other transfer of body armor, a
9 seller shall take possession of the purchaser's permit to purchase
10 body armor and shall, on forms prescribed by the Attorney General,
11 complete a registration form that includes the personal identifying
12 information of the purchaser and a description of the body armor
13 purchased. The seller shall submit the registration form and the
14 permit to purchase body armor obtained from the purchaser to the
15 Attorney General within three business days.

16 (2) A seller who violates the provisions of paragraph (1) of this
17 subsection shall be subject to a civil penalty of up to \$500 for a first
18 offense and up to \$1,000 for a second or subsequent offense. The
19 civil penalty imposed may be collected with costs in a summary
20 proceeding pursuant to the "Penalty Enforcement Law of 1999,"
21 P.L.1999, c.274 (C.2A:58-10 et seq.). The Superior Court and the
22 municipal court shall have jurisdiction to enforce the provisions of
23 the "Penalty Enforcement Law of 1999" in connection with this
24 section.

25 f. The provisions of this section shall not apply to: (1) a State
26 or local government entity which purchases or possesses body
27 armor for the purpose of furnishing body armor to employees; and
28 (2) possession of body armor by an employee of a State or local
29 government entity during the employee's period of employment and
30 which is used for employment-related purposes.

31 g. The provisions of subsections a., b., and d. of this section
32 shall not apply to a seller who is a bona fide dealer of body armor
33 who has registered with the Attorney General. A dealer in the
34 business of selling body armor prior to the effective date of
35 P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill)
36 shall register within 60 days of the effective date of
37 P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill).

38 h. (1) Except as otherwise provided in subsection f. and g. of
39 this section, it is a crime of the third degree to possess body armor
40 unless it has been registered in accordance with subsection b. or e.
41 of this section.

42 (2) Except as otherwise provided in subsection f. and g. of this
43 section, it is a crime of the third degree to purchase or otherwise
44 take possession of body armor unless the purchaser has been
45 granted a body armor purchase permit pursuant to subsection d. of
46 this subsection and completes the purchase or other transfer in
47 accordance with the provisions of subsection e. of this section.

1 i. For the purposes of this section, “body armor” means any
2 product sold or offered for sale as personal protective body
3 covering intended to protect against gunfire, regardless of whether
4 the product is to be worn alone or is sold as a complement to
5 another product or garment.

6
7 2. Section 1 of P.L.1983, c.152 (C.2C:39-13) is amended to
8 read as follows:

9 1. Unlawful use of body **[vests]** armor. A person is guilty of a
10 crime if **[he]** the person uses or wears **[a]** body **[vest]** armor while
11 engaged in the commission of, or an attempt to commit, or flight
12 after committing or attempting to commit murder, manslaughter,
13 robbery, sexual assault, burglary, kidnaping, criminal escape or
14 assault under N.J.S.2C:12-1b. Use or wearing **[a]** body **[vest]**
15 armor while engaged in the commission of, or an attempt to
16 commit, or flight after committing or attempting to commit a crime
17 of the first degree is a crime of the second degree. Otherwise it is a
18 crime of the third degree.

19 As used in this section, “body **[vest]**” means bullet-resistant body
20 armor which is intended to provide ballistic and trauma protection **[**
21 armor” means any product sold or offered for sale as personal
22 protective body covering intended to protect against gunfire,
23 regardless of whether the product is to be worn alone or is sold as a
24 complement to another product or garment.

25 (cf: P.L.1999, c.306, s.1)

26
27 3. This act shall take effect on the first day of the seventh
28 month next following the date of enactment, except that the
29 Attorney General may take any anticipatory action in advance as
30 shall be necessary for the implementation of this act.

31 32 33 STATEMENT

34
35 This bill establishes prohibitions on the possession of body armor
36 by certain persons and a registration requirement for body armor.

37 The bill provides that it is unlawful for a person to own or
38 otherwise possess body armor unless the person has registered the
39 body armor in accordance with the bill’s provisions. The bill requires
40 the Attorney General to establish a registration process for body armor
41 owned prior to the effective date of the bill and provides that an owner
42 has 90 days from the effective date to register each piece of body
43 armor owned in compliance with the registration process.

44 For purchases of body armor occurring after the bill’s effective
45 date, a person would be required to meet eligibility criteria established
46 by the Attorney General and obtain a permit to purchase body armor,

1 and a seller of body armor would be required to register the sale of the
2 body armor with the Attorney General.

3 Under the bill, the eligibility criteria would include: (1) law
4 enforcement officers; (2) law enforcement officers who retired in good
5 standing; (3) persons engaged in active duty military service; (4)
6 persons whose duties of employment expose them to serious bodily
7 injury that may be prevented or mitigated by the use of body armor, as
8 determined by the Attorney General; (5) bona fide dealers of body
9 armor; and (6) any other persons meeting good cause eligibility criteria
10 established by the Attorney General.

11 The bill requires the Attorney General to establish a permit to
12 purchase body armor and an application process for a person to obtain
13 the permit. The application is required to include, but need not be
14 limited to an applicant's: name; date of birth; street and mailing
15 address; telephone number; email address; and proof that the applicant
16 meets the eligibility criteria set forth in the bill. The bill provides that
17 the permit would remain in effect for 30 days following issuance.

18 Under the bill, a person is prohibited from selling, giving,
19 transferring, assigning, or otherwise disposing of body armor to a
20 person unless the person purchasing or otherwise taking possession of
21 the body armor has first secured a permit to purchase body armor and
22 displays the same to the seller.

23 Following the sale or other transfer of body armor, a seller is
24 required to take possession of the purchaser's permit to purchase body
25 armor and complete a registration form that includes the personal
26 identifying information of the purchaser and a description of the body
27 armor purchased. The bill requires the seller to submit the registration
28 form and the permit to purchase body armor obtained from the
29 purchaser to the Attorney General within three business days. A seller
30 who violates these provisions would be subject to a civil penalty of up
31 to \$500 for a first offense and up to \$1,000 for a second or subsequent
32 offense.

33 The provisions of the bill would not apply to: (1) a State or local
34 government entity which purchases or possesses body armor for the
35 purpose of furnishing body armor to employees; or (2) possession of
36 body armor by employees of a State or local government entity during
37 the employee's period of employment and used for employment-
38 related purposes.

39 The registration and permit to purchase body armor provisions of
40 the bill would not apply to a bona fide dealer of body armor who has
41 registered with the Attorney General. A dealer in business prior to the
42 bill's effective date has 60 days following the effective date to register
43 with the Attorney General.

44 Possessing or purchasing body armor in violation of the bill's
45 provisions are both crimes of the third degree. A third degree crime is
46 punishable by three to five years imprisonment, a fine of up to
47 \$15,000, or both.

1 The bill defines “body armor” as any product sold or offered for
2 sale as personal protective body covering intended to protect against
3 gunfire, regardless of whether the product is to be worn alone or is
4 sold as a complement to another product or garment.
5 The bill additionally amends current law concerning unlawful use
6 of body vests. Under current law, it is a crime of the second or third
7 degree, depending on circumstances, to use a body vest during the
8 commission of certain crimes. The bill redefines the term “body vest”
9 as “body armor” and expands the current law to include all body
10 armor.