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**SFA****BILL ANALYSIS**

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Senate Bill 838 (Substitute S-1 as reported)  
Senate Bill 838 (Substitute S-1 as reported)  
Sponsor: Senator Gary Peters (Senate Bill 838)  
Senator William Van Regenmorter (Senate Bill 839)  
Committee: Judiciary

## **CONTENT**

Senate Bills 838 (S-1) and 839 (S-1) would amend the Michigan Penal Code and the Code of Criminal Procedure, respectively, to prohibit and provide penalties for the purchase, ownership, possession or use of “body armor”, without police authorization, by a person who had been convicted of a “violent felony”; and include the proposed offense in sentencing guidelines. The bills would take effect 90 days after their enactment and Senate Bill 839 (S-1) is tie-barred to Senate Bill 838.

Under Senate Bill 838 (S-1), “body armor” would mean that term as defined elsewhere in the Penal Code: “clothing or a device designed or intended to protect an individual’s body or a portion of an individual’s body from injury caused by a firearm” (MCL 750.227f). “Violent felony” would mean that term as defined in the parole provisions of the Department of Corrections law (MCL 791.236): felonious assault, assault with intent to commit murder, assault with intent to do great bodily harm, assault with intent to maim, assault with intent to commit a felony not otherwise specified, unarmed assault with intent to rob and steal, or armed assault with intent to rob and steal; first-degree murder, second-degree murder, or manslaughter; kidnapping, the taking of a hostage by a prisoner, or kidnapping a person under 14 years old; mayhem; first-, second-, third-, or fourth-degree criminal sexual conduct (CSC) or assault with intent to commit CSC; armed robbery with aggravated assault, carjacking, or unarmed robbery.

Senate Bill 838 (S-1) provides that a person who had been convicted of a violent felony could not purchase, own, possess, or use body armor. If the person’s employment, livelihood, or safety depended on his or her ability to buy, own, possess, or use body armor, however, the person could petition the chief of police of the local unit of government in which he or she lived or the county sheriff, if he or she did not live in a local unit that had a police department, for written permission to buy, own, possess, or use body armor.

The police chief or sheriff could grant written permission if he or she determined that the petitioner was likely to use body armor in a safe and lawful manner and had reasonable need for the protection provided by body armor. In making this determination, the police chief or sheriff would have to consider the petitioner’s continued employment, the interests of justice, and other circumstances justifying issuance of written permission. The police chief or sheriff could restrict written permission in any manner he or she determined appropriate, and would have to state the restrictions in the permission document. The person who received the written permission would have to possess that document when he or she bought, owned, possessed, or used body armor.

A violation of the bill pertaining to the purchase, ownership, possession, or use of body armor would be a felony, punishable by up to four years’ imprisonment, a maximum fine of \$2,000, or both. A violation of the bill for failure to possess written permission granted by a police chief or sheriff would be a misdemeanor, punishable by up to 93 days’ imprisonment, a maximum fine of \$100, or both.

The bill states: “It is the intent of the legislature that chiefs of police and county sheriffs exercise broad discretion in determining whether to issue written permission to purchase, own, possess, or use body armor under this section. However, nothing in this section requires a chief of police or county sheriff to issue written permission to any particular petitioner. The issuance of written permission...does not relieve any person or entity from criminal liability that might otherwise be imposed.”

Under Senate Bill 839 (S-1), the purchase, ownership, possession, or use of body armor by a felon would be

categorized as a Class F felony against the public safety, with a statutory maximum sentence of four years, as proposed by Senate Bill 838.

Proposed MCL 750.227g (S.B. 838)  
MCL 777.16m (S.B. 839)

Legislative Analyst: P. Affholter

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

Senate Bills 838 (S-1) and 839 (S-1) would have an indeterminate fiscal impact on State and local government.

There are no data available to indicate how many people could be convicted of the felony of purchasing, owning, possessing, or using body armor. Nor are there data available to indicate how many people who were given special permission to use body armor, would not have proof on their person, which would be a misdemeanor. The felony would be a Class F crime, which has a minimum sentence range from 0-3 months to 17-30 months.

Assuming that 10 people a year would be found guilty of this offense and sentenced to prison for a minimum of 30 months, given that the average cost of incarceration is \$22,000 annually, the cost of incarcerating these offenders would be \$550,000 per year. Assuming that 10 people a year were convicted of this offense and each received a sentence within the lower minimum range, costs for incarceration would be incurred by local units of government.

Additionally, local units of government would incur costs or receive fine revenues from the misdemeanor offense, which would have a maximum penalty of 93 days' incarceration and/or a fine of \$100. Costs of incarceration vary among the counties.

Date Completed: 11-1-99

Fiscal Analyst: K. Firestone

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This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan Senate staff for use by the Senate in its deliberations and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.