



New York bans most civilians from wearing bulletproof vests

Description

USA: New York Gov. Kathy Hochul has banned most state residents from buying bulletproof vests for civilian use with very few exceptions.

The law, which went into effect on July 6, banned all state residents “not engaged or employed in an eligible profession” from purchasing, owning, selling, exchanging, giving away or personally disposing of body armor.

The “eligible professions” initially only included police officers, peace officers and people currently serving in the United States Armed Forces or in the New York State Army or Air National Guard.

The law was pushed through the New York State Legislature following the mass shooting at a grocery store in Buffalo in May that killed 10 people. When the law was initially passed, it only banned “bullet-resistant soft body armor,” which could have potentially served as a loophole for civilians who wanted to buy bulletproof vests made with steel, ceramic or polyethylene plates.

Notably, this loophole does not cover the steel-plated vest the Buffalo gunman wore during the shooting, which was strong enough to stop a bullet fired from the firearm of one of the grocery store’s security guards.

Democratic State Assemblyman Jonathan Jacobson, the lead sponsor of the bill, admitted that they did not know the difference between the different kinds of body armor when they were writing the bill.

“I think the important thing was that we took important steps that lessened the possibility that criminals will be using bulletproof vests in commission of crimes,” he claimed, adding that he is willing to rework the legislation to cover body armor using steel, ceramic or polyethylene plates.

“We wanted to get things done as quickly as possible and not let the perfect get in the way of the good,” argued Jacobson. “Like all laws in New York State, we always try to make them better in the future. Of course, we’ll try to make this law better.”

Hochul’s office also took this position in public statements without admitting any shortcomings

regarding understanding the different kinds of body armor.

“Gov. Hochul was proud to sign the groundbreaking new law passed by the legislature to restrict sales of body armor, and will work with the legislature to expand the definitions in the law at the first available opportunity,” her office said.

Law restricts the right of New Yorkers to self-defense

New York’s bulletproof vest ban is the first widespread ban on owning body armor. Nationwide, very few states and local jurisdictions even have restrictions on body armor sales. The strictest state and federal laws against owning and wearing body armor are only for violent felons.

The closest comparable law is in Connecticut, which prevented people from buying body armor from anybody except licensed dealers, and they had to make the purchase in person and not online or via mail order.

Brad Pedell, the owner of 221B Tactical, a tactical gear and body armor store in New York City, noted how many of his customers want to own body armor to protect themselves against criminals with guns or sharp weapons.

“It’s disappointing because residents are just scared, and they come to us because they are scared, and we offer help that makes them feel more confident, that they won’t get stabbed or injured or potentially killed,” said Pedell. “The fact [lawmakers] are taking that away, for whatever purpose they have in their minds, I find that really sad and unnecessary and morally wrong.”

Journalist organizations in New York urged Hochul to veto the bill, citing concerns about the law making it difficult for people working in journalism to buy, own and wear body armor.

Instead of vetoing the bill, Hochul worked with lawmakers and state officials to expand the list of professions that make people eligible to own and wear body armor. This list now includes process servers, firearms instructors, security officers at nuclear facilities, animal control officers, range safety officers and most kinds of journalists, including photographers, television and radio reporters and news crews.

Watch this clip from *Next News Network*, with Gary Franchi reporting on the bulletproof vests bound for Ukraine ending up in New York.

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