

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1263

As Passed House
February 22, 1993

Title: An act relating to Washington state patrol examinations for promotion.

Brief Description: Specifying testing for state patrol promotion.

Sponsors: Representatives R. Fisher, Schmidt, R. Meyers and Zellinsky.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
State Government, February 8, 1993, DP;
Passed House, February 22, 1993, 96-0.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 6 members: Representatives Anderson, Chair; Veloria, Vice Chair; Reams, Ranking Minority Member; Vance, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Conway; and King.

Staff: Bonnie Austin (786-7135).

Background: State patrol officers are exempt from the state's civil service laws. Examinations for the promotion of officers are conducted under the supervision of the Chief of the State Patrol. Testing requirements are detailed in statute. For example, testing for promotion to the rank of lieutenant is required to be conducted and weighted as follows: service rating - 40 percent; written examination - 30 percent; oral examination - 20 percent; and personnel record - 10 percent. For promotion to the rank of sergeant, an officer's service rating and written examination are each weighted at 50 percent. All eligible officers are given 30 days notice of the examination.

According to the State Patrol, the current testing requirements negatively impact employee morale because officers are not given feedback on how to improve their performance. Additionally, new evaluative procedures, such as "group activity" evaluations and "in-basket" testing are not allowed under the current formulae. These new evaluation techniques are considered very effective.

However, they are time consuming and expensive. The State Patrol would like the flexibility to conduct these evaluations only on the top candidates.

Summary of Bill: The State Patrol examination for promotion to the rank of sergeant or lieutenant will consist of one or more of the following components: oral examination; written examination; service rating; personnel records; and assessment center or other valid tests. The statutory weighting of test components is deleted. A cutoff score for each testing component may be set that will eliminate those candidates scoring below the cutoff. Testing notices will specify the type of examination expected to be used and the relative weights assigned to each component.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: The State Patrol needs more flexibility in their testing procedures. The "forced choice" evaluation system that has been used for the past 10 years is effective in choosing good officers, but does not provide opportunity for feedback. Employee morale has suffered. The State Patrol sat down with the union last summer and together came up with this proposal. The State Patrol will discuss any test changes with the union prior to implementation. This bill is needed for the coming testing cycle.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: Tim Erickson, State Patrol (pro); and Annette Sanelberg, State Patrol (pro).