

SENATE BILL REPORT

E2SHB 1423

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Law & Justice, April 3, 1997
Ways & Means, April 7, 1997

Title: An act relating to criminal justice training.

Brief Description: Strengthening the criminal justice training commission.

Sponsors: House Committee on Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Sterk, Costa, Sheahan, McDonald, Koster, Robertson, Carrell, Sherstad, Hickel, Delvin, L. Thomas, O'Brien and Conway).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Law & Justice: 3/26/97, 4/3/97 [DPA-WM].
Ways & Means: 4/7/97 [DPA (LAW)].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LAW & JUSTICE

Majority Report: Do pass as amended and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.
Signed by Senators Roach, Chair; Johnson, Vice Chair; Fairley, Goings, Hargrove, Kline, McCaslin, Stevens and Zarelli.

Staff: Dick Armstrong (786-7460)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: Do pass as amended by Committee on Law & Justice.
Signed by Senators West, Chair; Strannigan, Vice Chair; Bauer, Brown, Fraser, Hochstatter, Kohl, Loveland, McDonald, Roach, Rossi, Schow, Sheldon, Snyder, Spanel, Swecker, Thibaudeau, Winsley and Zarelli.

Staff: Bryon Moore (786-7726)

Background: The Criminal Justice Training Commission was established in 1974 for the primary purpose of providing basic law enforcement training, corrections training, and educational programs for criminal justice personnel, including commissioned officers, corrections officers, fire marshals, and prosecuting attorneys.

Membership. The commission consists of 12 members who are selected as follows:

- The Governor appoints two incumbent sheriffs and two incumbent chiefs of police.
- The Governor appoints one person employed in a county correctional system and one person employed in the state correctional system.

- The Governor appoints one incumbent county prosecuting attorney or municipal attorney.
- The Governor appoints one elected official of a local government.
- The Governor appoints one private citizen.
- The three remaining members are: (a) the Attorney General, (b) the special agent in charge of the Seattle office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and (c) the Chief of the State Patrol.

Training. Basic law enforcement officer training is generally required of all full-time commissioned law enforcement employees of the state. The training consists of a 440-hour program covering a wide variety of subjects, including constitutional and criminal law and procedures, criminal investigation, firearms training, and communication and writing skills. The law enforcement training is available only to persons employed as commissioned law enforcement officers and must be commenced within the first six months of employment of each law enforcement officer.

Course Fees. The commission is funded by appropriations from the public safety and education account. It provides training to criminal justice personnel at no cost.

Training Evaluation. In 1996 the Legislature directed the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs to review the commission along with its duties and administration. The intent of this study was to review the current fiscal costs associated with providing training while raising the standards of quality law enforcement training.

Investigation Training on Cases Involving Children. The commission does not provide an intensive training session on the investigation of child abuse and neglect cases.

Summary of Amended Bill: Membership. The membership of the commission is increased by two positions for a total of 14 members. The two members are appointed by the Governor and must be peace officers with the rank of sergeant or below and who are currently serving as training officers.

Training. Effective January 1, 1999, all law enforcement personnel hired, transferred or promoted to supervisory positions are required to complete the core training requirements within six months unless the employee receives a waiver from the commission. All other position-related training must be completed within one year after the core training. The commission must provide room and board for attendees who do not live within 50 miles of the training center.

Training Evaluation. Two separate boards are established to make recommendations to the commission regarding law enforcement training: the Board on Law Enforcement Training Standards and Education, and the Board on Correctional Training Standards and Education.

The law enforcement board consists of 13 members:

- three members, recommended by the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs, must be from a county law enforcement agency;
- three members, recommended by the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs, must be from city police agencies;

- one member representing community colleges and one member representing four-year colleges;
- one member representing tribal law enforcement in Washington; and
- four members representing and recommended by the council of police officers.

The correctional board consists of 14 members:

- three members from the state correctional system of whom one must be employed as a front line correctional officer;
- three members from the county correctional system of whom one must be employed as a front line correctional officer;
- two members from the juvenile corrections or probation system (one at the state level and one at the county level);
- two members who are employed in community corrections;
- one member representing community colleges and one member representing four-year colleges; and
- two members with experience and interest in correctional training standards and education.

Each board must report to the commission at the end of each fiscal year regarding the effectiveness of training and education programs for criminal justice personnel. The members of both boards are appointed for six-year term limits. Members participating on these boards are eligible to receive reimbursement for their travel expenses to attend board meetings.

Every two years the commission must submit an evaluation of its training program to the Legislature.

Investigation Training on Cases Involving Children. The commission must provide an intensive training session on the investigation of child abuse and neglect cases.

Amended Bill Compared to Substitute Bill: The amendments remove the authority of the commission to impose course fees on new recruits for the cost of mandating basic law enforcement training. In addition, the two new positions on the commission do not have to be appointed from a list submitted by the Washington State Council of Police Officers.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

Testimony For (Law & Justice): This bill will help to provide better training for police officers and supervisory personnel. Existing training is not sufficient; hair dressers get more training.

The bill allows for charging of fees for recruits. The additional funding gives a predictable source of revenue. The commission needs the additional revenue to bring training to a more modern level. The training boards are important to keep the commission well informed.

If adequate funding was given to the commission from the PSEA account, the fee portion of the bill could be deleted.

Testimony Against (Law & Justice): None.

Testified (Law & Justice): Representative Sterk, original prime sponsor; Larry Erickson, Sheriffs and Police Chiefs Association; Gary Wegner, Assistant Director, Criminal Justice Training Commission.

Testimony For (Ways & Means): The provisions of the bill are an important component of improving criminal justice training in the state. Continuing study on ways to improve law enforcement and corrections training will refine the recommendations of the WASPC evaluation. This bill is a long overdue step at enhancing law enforcement training.

Testimony Against (Ways & Means): None.

Testified (Ways & Means): Garry Wegner, Criminal Justice Training Commission; Larry Erickson, Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs; Jim Mattheis, WSCPO.