

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## SB 5127

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**As Passed House:**

April 6, 2001

**Title:** An act relating to determining the number of unclassified personnel in the sheriff's office.

**Brief Description:** Determining the number of unclassified personnel in the sheriff's office.

**Sponsors:** By Senators Prentice, Patterson, McAuliffe and McDonald.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

Commerce & Labor: 3/28/01, 3/30/01 [DP].

**Floor Activity:**

Passed House: 4/6/01, 92-0.

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Increases the number of positions that may be exempted from classified civil service in county sheriff offices with more than 250 employees.
- Increases the number of administrative positions that may be exempted in county sheriff's offices in counties operating under a home rule charter with a population of more than 500,000.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE & LABOR

**Majority Report:** Do pass. Signed by 8 members: Representatives Clements, Republican Co-Chair; Conway, Democratic Co-Chair; B. Chandler, Republican Vice Chair; Wood, Democratic Vice Chair; Hunt, Kenney, Lisk and McMorris.

**Staff:** Chris Cordes (786-7103).

**Background:**

County sheriff offices operate under a civil service system that applies to most of the office's employees. Each county or combined county system has a civil service commission with three members appointed for six-year terms by the respective board of

county commissioners. The civil service commission's responsibilities include adopting rules regarding examinations, appointments, promotions, discharges, and other personnel actions and providing for matters and hearings connected with personnel administration. Employees covered by the civil service system may not be disciplined or dismissed except for cause.

The employees covered by the civil service system include all deputy sheriffs and other employees except the sheriff and a specified number of additional positions determined by the number of employees in the office as follows:

- Offices with one to 10 employees may exempt two positions.
- Offices with 11 to 20 employees may exempt three positions.
- Offices with 21 to 50 employees may exempt four positions.
- Offices with 51 to 100 employees may exempt five positions.
- Offices with over 100 employees may exempt six positions.

Exempt positions under this formula must be from the positions of undersheriff, inspector, chief criminal deputy, chief civil deputy, jail superintendent, and administrative assistant or secretary. When changes in the designation of exempt positions are made, the exemptions take effect only after the civil service commission has heard the issue in an open meeting.

Another exemption is permitted for one position in the 911 emergency communications system. In counties operating under a home rule charter with a population of 500,000 or more (King, Snohomish, and Pierce counties), the legislative authority may exempt up to 12 administrative positions.

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**Summary of Bill:**

The number of positions that may be exempted from the classified civil service in a county sheriff's office is increased from six positions in offices with more than 250 employees as follows:

- Offices with at least 251 but not more than 500 employees may exempt up to eight positions.
- Offices with more than 500 employees may exempt up to 10 positions.

The number of additional administrative positions that the legislative authority may exempt from classified service in a county that has a population of 500,000 or more and operates under a home rule charter is increased from 12 to 20.

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**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

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

**Testimony For:** County sheriff offices have grown in size and many are also providing additional services through contracts with other jurisdictions. The current exemptions are usually filled with administrators, which means that exemptions for executive support staff are not available. These exemptions are needed when the support staff provides assistance in matters such as labor issues. The sheriff, as an elected official, should be able to have an executive assistant that has loyalty to the elected official. These changes in the bill will allow growth in the management structure of sheriff's offices to match the new responsibilities they are assuming. There are no additional costs because all positions are filled only if local budgets are approved.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Testified:** Steve Ebbert, King County Police Officers Guild; and Joe Daniels, city of Sea-Tac.