

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 1324

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Judiciary, March 27, 2009

Title: An act relating to psychological examinations for peace officer certification.

Brief Description: Modifying the requirements of psychological examinations for peace officer certification.

Sponsors: Representatives O'Brien, Ericks, Goodman, Crouse and Wood; by request of Criminal Justice Training Commission.

Brief History: Passed House: 2/23/09, 96-0.

Committee Activity: Judiciary: 3/27/09 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Kline, Chair; Regala, Vice Chair; McCaslin, Ranking Minority Member; Carrell, Hargrove, Kohl-Welles, Roach and Tom.

Staff: Juliana Roe (786-7438)

Background: Applicants that have been offered a conditional offer of employment as a commissioned peace officer or a reserve officer, including those whose certifications have lapsed, must pass a psychological examination, in addition to other tests, as a condition of continuing employment. The psychological examination must be administered by a psychiatrist or psychologist licensed in Washington. The examination must consist of a standardized clinical test that is widely used as an objective screening tool for personality and psychosocial disorders. The test used and conditions under which the test is administered, scored, and interpreted must comply with accepted psychological standards. Additional tests can be administered at the option of the employing law enforcement agency.

Proponents of this legislation are concerned that there is currently no uniformity with regard to what psychological tests are being administered in different jurisdictions.

Summary of Bill: The psychological examination must be administered by a psychiatrist or psychologist licensed in Washington and must be in compliance with standards established in rules of the Criminal Justice Training Commission.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: This bill calls for the standardization of psychological examinations. The current statute refers to standards that do not exist. The assumption when the statute was enacted was that the Psychological Association had authority to set standards, but they do not. Standardization of these tests is needed. We have been working with a variety of stakeholders to work out a Washington Administrative Code to determine what the test is going to look like. These are merely minimum standards being set. There is nothing that prohibits additional tests from being conducted above and beyond what is set by the Criminal Justice Training Institute.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative O'Brien, prime sponsor; Debbie Mealy, Criminal Justice Training Commission.