

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5157

As of February 16, 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: Senators Brandland, Pridemore, McCaslin, Keiser and Shin; by request of Criminal Justice Training Commission.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Judiciary: 2/13/09.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

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, are required to pass a psychological examination, in addition to other tests, as a condition of continuing employment. The psychological examination is required to be administered by a psychiatrist or psychologist licensed in Washington. The examination is required to 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 commission.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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.

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: Currently there are no standards in Washington State for psychological examinations given to peace officers. This bill provides for an opportunity to set comprehensive standards. The bill removes language that is frivolous under current law. Washington will be following in the footsteps of other states, including California.

Persons Testifying: PRO: James Shaw, Police Psychologist; Doug Blair, Criminal Justice Training Commission; Lucy Homans, Washington State Psychological Association.