

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5304

As of January 27, 2015

Title: An act relating to competitive salaries and benefits for Washington state patrol officers.

Brief Description: Concerning competitive salaries and benefits for Washington state patrol officers.

Sponsors: Senators Rivers, Hobbs, Benton, Hatfield, Angel, Lias, Roach, Conway, Fain, Parlette, Dammeier and McAuliffe.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Transportation: 1/27/15.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Staff: Amanda Cecil (786-7429)

Background: Employees have the right to organize and to designate a representative for collective bargaining. Generally, a bargaining representative is any lawful organization that represents employees in their employment relations with employers as one of its primary purposes. The employer and the bargaining representative must meet at reasonable times to bargain in good faith in an effort to reach agreement with respect to wages, hours, and other terms and conditions of employment. Washington State Patrol (WSP) officers are represented by either the WSP Troopers and Sergeants Association or the WSP Lieutenants and Captains Association.

In 1965 law was enacted that established minimum monthly salary for officers of WSP that range from \$300 to \$425 based on position.

The annual vehicle license fee that is due on most vehicles is deposited as follows:

- \$20.35 of an initial or renewal goes to the State Patrol Highway Account;
- \$2.02 of each initial or \$0.93 of each renewal goes to the Puget Sound Ferry Operations Account; and
- any remaining amounts to the Motor Vehicle Fund.

Summary of Bill: The monthly minimum salaries are eliminated and replaced with a provision that states that monthly salary and benefits paid to an officer of WSP must be competitive with comparable law enforcement agencies within the boundaries of the state of

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.

Washington. Adjustments are intended to maintain the existing salary levels within the fiftieth percentile of the top five largest Washington law enforcement agencies' compensation plans.

The vehicle registration fee is changed to be deposited solely into the State Patrol Highway Account.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect on January 1, 2016.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: Troopers provide a valuable service to our state and salaries are not competitive. Local agencies pay more and are able to recruit experienced officers away from WSP. It also makes it difficult to recruit new officers when they can make more somewhere else. It is expensive for the state to train officers that they cannot retain. This language was included in a budget proviso in the 1990s and at that time salaries were made competitive. The State Patrol Highway Account used to get nearly \$28 per vehicle registration and now they get \$20.35. After the motor vehicle excise tax was repealed this was reduced and salaries have again fallen behind. WSP has a culture of service with humility and show up when needed. They are professional and not plagued by issues impacting other law enforcement agencies.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Rivers, prime sponsor; Rick Jensen, Jeff Merrill, WSP Troopers Assn.; EJ Swainson, WSP Lieutenant's Assn.