

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 6547

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As Reported by Senate Committee On:  
Transportation, February 24, 2016

**Title:** An act relating to Washington state patrol officer recruitment and compensation.

**Brief Description:** Concerning Washington state patrol officer recruitment and compensation.

**Sponsors:** Senators Becker, Ranker, Miloscia, O'Ban, Dammeier, Schoesler, Angel, Roach, Litzow, Parlette, McAuliffe, Rolfes and Conway.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Transportation: 2/01/16, 2/24/16 [DPS].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6547 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators King, Chair; Benton, Vice Chair; Fain, Vice Chair, Budget; Hobbs, Ranking Minority Member; Cleveland, Miloscia, Rivers, Sheldon and Takko.

**Staff:** Kellee Keegan (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 salaries 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

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- any remaining amounts to the Motor Vehicle Fund.

In 2015, 2ESHB 1299 passed the legislature, which directed the Joint Transportation Committee (JTC) to conduct a study on the recruitment and retention of state patrol troopers. The report was completed in December 2015.

**Summary of Bill (Recommended Substitute):** The WSP must conduct an outreach and marketing plan based on recommendations from the JTC report on recruitment and retention of state patrol officers. Specifically, the WSP is required to:

- develop a comprehensive outreach and marketing plan;
- expand marketing and outreach efforts online and through other media outlets; and
- poll recruits and track results.

The amount deposited into the State Patrol Highway Account per \$30 vehicle license fee is increased by \$3.50, making the new amount \$23.85.

**EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE (Recommended Substitute):** An intent section has been added. The distribution for the \$30 vehicle license fee has been changed from \$20.35 to \$23.85 to the State Patrol Highway Account. All other distributions are restored. Language referring to other fund transfers and salary increases to the state patrol has been removed. An effect date of July 1, 2017 has been added.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Committee/Commission/Task Force Created:** No.

**Effective Date:** The bill takes effect on July 1, 2017.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** PRO: In Washington, we're losing a lot of officers because of morale. We need more officers out there. They are important, and the Washington State Patrol is having a hard time recruiting and retaining officers. Graduation classes are at an all time low. The Joint Transportation Committee study has 40 percent of all troopers eligible to retire in the next five years. Not a day goes by where a trooper isn't recruited by an outside law enforcement agency. Tying salaries to a mechanism in statute that will keep the agency competitive would help. Without an increase in WSP officers, the increase in population around Seattle comprises the safety of people. Mortalities are up on the highways, commute times are up. The inability to recruit and retain is compromising the safety of our state highways.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Senator Randi Becker, sponsor; EJ Swainson, Washington State Patrol Lieutenants Association; Davor Gjurasic, WSP Troopers Association; Sargent Courtney Stewart, WSP Troopers Association; Jeff Merrill, President WSP Troopers Association.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** No one.