

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## HB 1253

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### As Reported by House Committee On: Public Safety

**Title:** An act relating to the timeline for commencing basic law enforcement training.

**Brief Description:** Concerning the timeline for commencing basic law enforcement training.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Kloba, Irwin, Goodman, Klippert, Lovick, Kilduff, Ryu, Walen, Stanford, Appleton and Pellicciotti.

#### **Brief History:**

##### **Committee Activity:**

Public Safety: 1/21/19, 1/31/19 [DP].

#### **Brief Summary of Bill**

- Requires newly hired law enforcement personnel to commence Basic Law Enforcement Academy training within two months of employment, rather than within six months.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY

**Majority Report:** Do pass. Signed by 11 members: Representatives Goodman, Chair; Davis, Vice Chair; Klippert, Ranking Minority Member; Sutherland, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Appleton, Graham, Griffey, Lovick, Orwall, Pellicciotti and Pettigrew.

**Staff:** Omeara Harrington (786-7136).

#### **Background:**

The Criminal Justice Training Commission (CJTC) provides basic law enforcement training and educational programs for law enforcement, corrections officers, and other public safety professionals in Washington.

Basic law enforcement officer training is required of all law enforcement personnel, with the exception of volunteers and reserve officers. The Basic Law Enforcement Academy (BLEA) consists of a 720-hour program covering a wide variety of subjects including: criminal law

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and procedures, traffic enforcement, cultural awareness, communication and writing skills, emergency vehicle operations, firearms, crisis intervention, patrol procedures, criminal investigation, and defensive tactics.

All newly hired law enforcement personnel are required to commence the BLEA within six months of employment, unless the CJTC waives or extends the requirement.

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**Summary of Bill:**

All newly hired law enforcement personnel are required to commence the BLEA within two months of employment, rather than within six months, unless the CJTC waives or extends the requirement.

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**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Effective Date:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:**

(In support) Under current statute, newly hired law enforcement officers must be trained in the BLEA within six months of being hired. Law enforcement agencies have reported that this six-month wait time creates a lot of problems and puts a strain on city and county budgets and personnel. Forty-six percent of law enforcement officers will be eligible for retirement within the next five years. New recruits cannot be on the street performing duties until they are trained, so the agency has to pay for a replacement officer during that time. The CJTC is increasing the number of classes offered in order to reduce the backlog that was created by underfunding the BLEA. The CJTC can handle up to 20 classes a year.

The two-month wait time will help maintenance-level budgets and chip away at the backlog. The current system creates an outrageous waste of taxpayer dollars. This bill would reduce the cost of putting a recruit on the street significantly. Under the current six-month system, it takes over a year from when a law enforcement officer is hired until they become a fully functioning officer. This bill would bring the timeline to under a year, which is still a long process, but an improvement. Businesses would not hire someone and pay for them while they are not working, and it does not make sense for cities to have to do this. There is not this kind of delay in any other industry, and it certainly should not exist in public safety. The current system is not safe for the officer or the community. There are situations in which one officer is responding to calls that two officers should respond to, or having to work nine or 10 days consecutively. Training is important more now than ever. Better training and more training will save lives.

(Opposed) None.

(Other) Clarity is needed relating to when the two-month clock starts. Pre-employment checks take time. The burden should not fall on the agency if there is insufficient time to complete those checks.

**Persons Testifying:** (In support) Representative Kloba, prime sponsor; Sharon Swanson, Association of Washington Cities; Tom Agnew, City of Bothell; Leslie Cushman, De-Escalate Washington; James McMahan, Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs; Dan Yourkowski, Normandy Park Police Department; and Sue Rahr, Criminal Justice Training Commission.

(Other) Lynnette Buffington, Washington State Fraternal Order of Police.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** None.