

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2560

As Reported by House Committee On:
Public Safety

Title: An act relating to basic law enforcement training.

Brief Description: Concerning basic law enforcement training.

Sponsors: Representatives Maycumber, Lovick, Klippert, Chapman, Lekanoff, Corry, Walsh, Van Werven, Chambers, Kloba, Dent, Griffey, Barkis, Graham, Goehner, Blake, Leavitt, Irwin, Gildon, Orwall and Volz.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Public Safety: 1/28/20, 1/30/20 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the Criminal Justice Training Commission to provide a minimum of 15 Basic Law Enforcement Academy trainings per fiscal year beginning July 1, 2021, and a minimum of 19 trainings per fiscal year beginning July 1, 2024.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 11 members: Representatives Goodman, Chair; Davis, Vice Chair; Appleton, 2nd Vice Chair; Klippert, Ranking Minority Member; Sutherland, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; 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.

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.

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 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.

Summary of Bill:

Beginning July 1, 2021, the CJTC must provide at least 15 BLEA trainings per fiscal year, and, beginning July 1, 2024, it must provide at least 19 BLEA trainings per fiscal year. If enrollment is insufficient to fill these trainings, the CJTC may reduce the number of trainings to satisfy enrollment needs. The CJTC is not prohibited from requesting funding for, or otherwise providing, additional trainings beyond the required minimum number.

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) Washington is ranked last in the nation for law enforcement officers per capita. The state is facing a wave of officer retirements, and there are major delays getting new officers from hiring to the point in which they can be on the street. Having an adequate police force affects all of us, from the officer on the street needing backup, to our families and children when they reach out in desperate need of help. Setting a minimum number of law enforcement classes in statute is a needed change. The current system of funding classes year by year is not ideal, and a different funding style would be preferable. The struggle with having enough commissioned officers has huge impacts on officer safety and reduction of crime, and also has implications on use of force. Having vacancies while awaiting training for new officers affects morale and effectiveness. It is hard enough to find qualified people who are interested in being police officers. Once those people are located, there are additional struggles getting them into the BLEA. Hiring involves a written test, selection, and an interview process, followed by a polygraph and psychological examination. All of this has to be done before the person enters the academy, and then there is an additional physical fitness test to enter the class. The growing issue with wait time to enter the BLEA creates recruitment problems for small towns and tribal communities in particular, as larger agencies often fill classes.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Maycumber, prime sponsor; Derek Zable, Criminal Justice Training Commission; Jeff DeVere, Washington Council of Police and Sheriffs; James McMahan, Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs; and John Snaza, Washington State Sheriffs Association.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.