
Public Safety Committee

HB 2664

Brief Description: Concerning sheriff's office qualifications.

Sponsors: Representatives Lovick, Klippert, Goodman and Fey.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires persons filing a declaration of candidacy for sheriff to be certified as a general authority peace officer, exempt from peace officer certification, or have a certificate of completion for a sheriff preparation course.
- Requires the Criminal Justice Training Commission to establish and administer a sheriff preparation course, and applies a surcharge to declaration of candidacy filings for the office of sheriff in order to partially fund the course.
- Requires newly elected sheriffs to have a certificate of completion for a new sheriff training program within 12 months of assuming office.

Hearing Date: 1/28/20

Staff: Omeara Harrington (786-7136).

Background:

Criminal Justice Training Commission and Peace Officer Certification.

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

The CJTC also certifies and, when necessary, decertifies officers. All general authority peace officers, including local law enforcement officers and those employed by the state agencies, are required to obtain and maintain certification. In the commissioning process an applicant must submit to a background investigation, the results of which are used to determine the applicant's suitability for employment as a commissioned officer. Certification may be denied or revoked if a person is or becomes unsuitable for law enforcement, and certification lapses when an officer has a break in service lasting more than 24 months.

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.

Sheriff's Office Qualifications and Duties.

The sheriff is the chief executive officer and conservator of the peace of the county. In the execution of the office, the sheriff and the sheriff's deputies make arrests of persons committing offenses, defend the county against threats to public peace or safety, execute warrants and process and orders of the court, and attend sessions of the courts. The office of the sheriff is also responsible for issuing concealed pistol licenses and carrying out other processes related to firearms, and for registering sex offenders, among other duties.

The county sheriff is an elected position. A person who files a declaration of candidacy for the office of sheriff must have, within 12 months of assuming office, a certificate of completion of a basic law enforcement training program.

Summary of Bill:

The CJTC must establish and administer a sheriff preparation course for individuals who are not certified peace officers. In establishing the course, the CJTC must adopt rules outlining the duration and curricula required to properly equip a person who is not a certified peace officer with the knowledge and skills necessary to occupy the office of sheriff. The course must be held at least once every four years.

After September 1, 2020, in order to file a declaration of candidacy for the office of sheriff, a person must produce: (1) valid documentation showing that the person is currently certified as a general authority peace officer in the state of Washington; (2) a bona fide letter from the CJTC showing that the person has been approved by the CJTC to receive a peace officer certification exemption or waiver; or (3) a certificate of completion for the sheriff preparation course that is not more than four years old.

In addition to any other applicable filing fees, any person filing a declaration of candidacy for the office of sheriff must pay a filing fee surcharge of equal to one-half of 1 percent of the annual salary of the office at the time of filing to fund the sheriff preparation course. If the candidate lacks sufficient funds for the surcharge, he or she must submit an additional number of unique signatures of registered voters that is equal to the number of dollars of the filing fee. All costs associated with the sheriff preparation course that are not covered by the surcharge must be entirely self-funded by those attending the course, and the CJTC must establish and assess a fee to each enrolled participant.

Within 12 months of assuming office, a newly elected sheriff must have a certificate of completion of a new sheriff training program, rather than a basic law enforcement training program.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 24, 2020.

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