

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6547

As of February 2, 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.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

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
- 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.

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.

Summary of Bill: 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 bill requires the WSP 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.

State Patrol salaries agency-wide are increased by 7.5 percent over three years.

The vehicle license fee is changed to be deposited solely into the State Patrol Highway Account. Additional funds from electric vehicle credits are transferred from the Multimodal Transportation Account into the State Patrol Highway Account, to be used for the 7.5 percent WSP salary increase. If the funds available are not sufficient to meet the needs of the State Patrol for training and hiring at least ten new officers annually, the amount necessary is transferred from the Connecting Washington Account project funds for fish culverts (PIN L1100066).

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

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.