

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1423

As Reported By House Committee On:
Criminal Justice & Corrections

Title: An act relating to criminal justice training.

Brief Description: Strengthening the criminal justice training commission.

Sponsors: Representatives Sterk, Costa, Sheahan, McDonald, Koster, Robertson, Carrell, Sherstad, Hickel, Delvin, L. Thomas, O'Brien and Conway.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Criminal Justice & Corrections: 2/14/97, 2/19/97 [DPS].

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CRIMINAL JUSTICE & CORRECTIONS

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 13 members: Representatives Ballasiotes, Chairman; Benson, Vice Chairman; Koster, Vice Chairman; Quall, Ranking Minority Member; O'Brien, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Blalock; Cairnes; Delvin; Dickerson; Hickel; Mitchell; Robertson and Sullivan.

Staff: Yvonne Walker (786-7841).

Background: The Criminal Justice Training Commission was established in 1974 for the primary purpose of providing basic law enforcement training, corrections training, and educational programs for criminal justice personnel, including commissioned officers, corrections officers, fire marshals, and prosecuting attorneys.

Training. Basic law enforcement officer training is generally required of all full-time commissioned law enforcement employees of the state. The training consists of a 440 hour program covering a wide variety of subjects, including constitutional and criminal law and procedures, criminal investigation, firearms training, and communication and writing skills. The law enforcement training is available only to persons employed as commissioned law enforcement officers and must be commenced within the first six months of employment of each law enforcement officer.

Course Fees. Although the commission is funded by appropriations from the public safety and education account, it provides training to criminal justice personnel at no cost.

Training Evaluation. In 1996 the Legislature directed the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs to review the commission along with its duties and administration. The intent of this study was to review the current fiscal costs associated with providing training while raising the standards of quality law enforcement training.

Investigation Training on Cases Involving Children. The commission does not provide an intensive training session on the investigation of child abuse and neglect cases.

Summary of Substitute Bill: Training and Course Fees. All law enforcement personnel hired, transferred or promoted effective January 1, 1999 are required to complete the core training requirements within six months unless the employee receives a waiver from the commission. All other position related training must be completed within one year after the core training.

Effective July 1, 1997, the Criminal Justice Training Commission must begin charging course fees to all local law enforcement officers participating in the mandatory basic law enforcement training. The commission has the discretion to charge law enforcement personnel for training other than the mandatory basic law enforcement courses. Course fees must be equal to all or a portion of the costs associated with providing the training courses.

The commission is authorized to waive fees or establish monthly payment schedules with interest rates not to exceed 8 percent to enable officers to pay for their basic training. Fees must be paid in full in order for an officer to receive a certification of completion for a training course unless that officer has signed a note to participate in a monthly payment schedule. All revenue received from the training fees will be deposited in the public safety and education account.

Training Evaluation. Two separate boards are established to make recommendations to the commission regarding law enforcement training: the Board on Law Enforcement Training Standards and Education, and the Board on Correctional Training Standards and Education.

The law enforcement board will consist of 13 members:

- three members from a county law enforcement agency;
- three members from city police agencies;

- one member representing community colleges and one member representing four-year colleges;
- one member representing tribal law enforcement in Washington; and
- four members representing and recommended by the council of police officers.

The correctional board will consist of 14 members:

- three members from the state correctional system;
- three members from the county correctional system;
- two members from the juvenile corrections or probation system (one at the state level and one at the county level);
- two members who are employed in community corrections;
- one member representing community colleges and one member representing four-year colleges; and
- two members with experience and interest in correctional training standards and education.

Each board must report to the commission at the end of each fiscal year regarding the effectiveness of training and education programs for criminal justice personnel. The members of both boards are appointed for six year term limits. Members participating on these boards are eligible to receive reimbursement for their travel expenses to attend board meetings.

Every two years the commission must submit an evaluation of its training program to the Legislature.

Investigation Training on Cases Involving Children. The substitute bill requires the commission to provide an intensive training session on the investigation of child abuse and neglect cases.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: Training and Course Fees. Instead of charging law enforcement personnel for the costs of training as provided in the underlying bill, the law enforcement agency will bear the costs for all training other than the basic law enforcement course.

The interest charges are eliminated for courses other than the mandatory basic law enforcement training.

Training Evaluation. The law enforcement training standards and education board will include one police chief from a city with a population under 5,000.

Room and board must be provided to all attendees who live 100 miles or further from the training center. All training must be done in a reasonable and accommodating manner for local law enforcement agencies.

Investigation Training on Cases Involving Children. The Substitute bill requires the commission to provide an intensive training session on the investigation of child abuse and neglect cases.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 4, 1997.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

Testimony For: It takes a person 1,600 hours to become a hairdresser, however it only takes a person 440 hours to become a police officer and carry a firearm. This core training to be provided by the Criminal Justice Training Commission is needed to ensure all training is universal across the state and as a result will also reduce liability issues. In addition, by requiring officers to fund their own training, the state may be able draw higher quality candidates. Officers that are forced to pay for their own training are more willing to make the law enforcement profession as a career. Only in this profession is a person able to not only receive a well paying job but to also receive the associated training at full cost to the state.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Representative Mark Sterk, prime sponsor (pro); John Turner, study group (pro); Doug Blair, Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs (pro); Garry Wegner, Training Commission (pro); Mike Patrick, Council of Police (pro); and Kathy Gerke, Association of Washington Cities (pro).