

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1944

As Reported by House Committee On:
Agriculture & Natural Resources

Title: An act relating to exempting certain law enforcement officers from the hunter education training program.

Brief Description: Exempting certain law enforcement officers from the hunter education training program.

Sponsors: Representatives Condotta and Hayes.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Agriculture & Natural Resources: 2/14/17, 2/16/17 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Exempts certain law enforcement officers from the field firearms skills portion of any hunter education course completed online.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 14 members: Representatives Blake, Chair; Chapman, Vice Chair; Buys, Ranking Minority Member; Dent, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Chandler, Fitzgibbon, Kretz, Orcutt, Pettigrew, Robinson, Schmick, Springer, Stanford and J. Walsh.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 1 member: Representative Lytton.

Staff: Rebecca Lewis (786-7339).

Background:

Hunter Education.

All individuals born after January 1, 1972, must show proof of completion of a hunter education course before purchasing a hunting license for the first time. The course must include at least 10 hours of instruction covering firearms and outdoor safety, hunter

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responsibility, and wildlife management. To receive proof of completion a person must pass an exam, either in a classroom setting or online, and demonstrate safe firearms handling skills in the field. Members of the United States military who complete the online hunter education course are exempt from the field firearms skills portion.

Law Enforcement Officers.

Law enforcement officers in Washington are either general authority Washington peace officers (general authority officers), limited authority Washington peace officers (limited authority officers), or specially commissioned Washington peace officers (specially commissioned officers).

General authority officers are full-time and fully compensated, and are either an elected, appointed, or an employed officer of a general authority Washington law enforcement agency who may enforce any traffic or criminal law of the state throughout the state. General authority law enforcement agencies include the Washington State Patrol (WSP) and the Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Limited authority officers are full-time, and fully compensated officers of a law enforcement agency that has, as one of its functions, the enforcement of traffic or specific criminal laws relating to limited subject areas or within specific geographic boundaries. Limited authority law enforcement agencies include the departments of Natural Resources, Social and Health Services, and Corrections, and the Parks and Recreation Commission.

Specially commissioned officers are commissioned by a general authority law enforcement agency, but do not qualify as either a general or limited authority law enforcement officer. Specially commissioned law enforcement officers include full-time, fully compensated peace officers duly commissioned by the states of Oregon or Idaho, or a unit of local government of Oregon or Idaho.

A "peace officer" means any law enforcement personnel subject to basic law enforcement training under the Criminal Justice Training Commission (CJTC). Commissioned officers of the WSP and Department of Fish and Wildlife officers are considered peace officers. Tribal governments may voluntarily request certification for their police officers. Tribal governments requesting certification for their police officers must enter into a written agreement with the CJTC. The agreement must require the tribal law enforcement agency and its officers to comply with all of the requirements for granting, denying, and revoking certification as those requirements are applied to peace officers certified under this chapter and the rules of the CJTC.

The CJTC provides basic law enforcement training, corrections training, and educational programs for criminal justice personnel, including commissioned law enforcement officers. Basic law enforcement officer training is generally required of all law enforcement officers, with the exception of volunteers, and reserve officers employed in Washington. The training consists of a 720-hour program covering a wide variety of subjects including: constitutional and criminal law and procedures, criminal investigation, firearms training, and communication and writing skills. All law enforcement personnel hired, transferred, or promoted, are required to complete the core training requirements within six months, unless the employee receives a waiver from the CJTC.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

The following current or retired law enforcement officers are exempt from the field firearms skills portion of any hunter education course completed online:

- current or retired general authority officers;
- limited authority officers authorized to carry a concealed pistol;
- specially commissioned officers authorized to carry a concealed pistol; and
- current and retired Washington peace officers and tribal peace officers who have achieved peace officer certification or tribal police officer certification from the firearms skills portion of any hunter education course taken online. Peace officer certification must be in good standing or must not have been revoked.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

Current and retired Washington peace officers and tribal peace officers who have achieved peace officer or tribal police officer certification are also exempt from the firearms skills portion of any hunter education course taken online. Peace officer certification must be in good standing or must not have been revoked.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available. New fiscal note requested on February 17, 2017.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) This was a request from a constituent. Military officers are already exempt from the requirement to complete the field firearms skills portion of hunter education courses taken online. The bill could be narrowed if necessary. Exempting law enforcement officers from this training can save four to six hours of training for those that qualify. The concept is good, but should be limited to law enforcement officers who are required to be trained and licensed to carry a firearm by their commissioning authority. The Criminal Justice Training Commission reports that there may be some specially commissioned officers who are not required by their commissioning authority to receive training to carry a firearm.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Condotta, prime sponsor; and David Whipple, Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.