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**HOUSE BILL 2560**

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**State of Washington 66th Legislature 2020 Regular Session**

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

AN ACT Relating to basic law enforcement training; amending RCW 43.101.200; and creating a new section.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  The legislature finds that Washington is experiencing a shortage of qualified law enforcement officers. Recent research suggests that Washington has the lowest ratio of law enforcement officers to residents compared to any other state in the nation. Recruitment and hiring of new officers has become increasingly challenging, due in part to excessive delays in accessing the state's basic law enforcement academy. After an agency hires a new officer, he or she waits many months for an opening at the academy. Even though a new hire cannot be deployed in the field, agencies must pay his or her salary to prevent him or her from seeking employment elsewhere. Law enforcement agencies struggle with shouldering the costs of these wait times, while also attempting to compete with one another for qualified candidates.

The criminal justice training commission, which has the responsibility of hosting the basic law enforcement academy, requests funding from the state for sufficient academy classes year after year, with mixed success. The number of funded classes varies in each biennial budget. To date, there remains a significant waiting period for new hires to join a class. As a result, law enforcement agencies are losing qualified candidates to other agencies, other states, and often to other professions.

The legislature hereby establishes a statutory minimum number of required basic law enforcement academy classes. This is intended to reduce waiting times and increase predictability for agencies across the state. Nothing in this act is intended to prevent the commission from requesting additional classes above the minimum, and the commission should request such additional classes when forecasts in hiring indicate a need to do so.

**Sec.**  RCW 43.101.200 and 2019 c 415 s 969 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) All law enforcement personnel, except volunteers, and reserve officers whether paid or unpaid, initially employed on or after January 1, 1978, shall engage in basic law enforcement training which complies with standards adopted by the commission pursuant to RCW 43.101.080. For personnel initially employed before January 1, 1990, such training shall be successfully completed during the first fifteen months of employment of such personnel unless otherwise extended or waived by the commission and shall be requisite to the continuation of such employment. Personnel initially employed on or after January 1, 1990, shall commence basic training during the first six months of employment unless the basic training requirement is otherwise waived or extended by the commission. Successful completion of basic training is requisite to the continuation of employment of such personnel initially employed on or after January 1, 1990.

(2) Except as otherwise provided in this chapter, the commission shall provide the aforementioned training together with necessary facilities, supplies, materials, and the board and room of noncommuting attendees for seven days per week, except during the 2017-2019 and 2019-2021 fiscal biennia when the employing, county, city, or state law enforcement agency shall reimburse the commission for twenty-five percent of the cost of training its personnel. Additionally, to the extent funds are provided for this purpose, the commission shall reimburse to participating law enforcement agencies with ten or less full-time commissioned patrol officers the cost of temporary replacement of each officer who is enrolled in basic law enforcement training: PROVIDED, That such reimbursement shall include only the actual cost of temporary replacement not to exceed the total amount of salary and benefits received by the replaced officer during his or her training period.

(3) Beginning July 1, 2021, the commission shall provide at least fifteen basic law enforcement academy trainings per fiscal year. Beginning July 1, 2024, the commission shall provide at least nineteen basic law enforcement academy trainings per fiscal year. However, if enrollment is insufficient to fill the trainings required by this subsection, the commission may reduce the number of trainings to satisfy enrollment needs. Nothing in this subsection prohibits the commission from requesting funding for or otherwise providing additional trainings beyond those required in this subsection.

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