

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1785

As Passed House:

February 8, 2022

Title: An act relating to the minimum monthly salary paid to Washington state patrol troopers and sergeants.

Brief Description: Concerning the minimum monthly salary paid to Washington state patrol troopers and sergeants.

Sponsors: Representatives Fey, Barkis, Goodman, Robertson, Rule, Sullivan, Paul and Riccelli.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Transportation: 1/17/22, 1/20/22 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/8/22, 96-0.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Eliminates the June 30, 2025, expiration date of requirements to set Washington State Patrol trooper and sergeant salaries to be competitive with other state law enforcement agencies, conduct salary surveys during the collective bargaining process, and provide proportionate salary increases for captains and lieutenants.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 26 members: Representatives Fey, Chair; Wylie, 1st Vice Chair; Bronoske, 2nd Vice Chair; Ramos, 2nd Vice Chair; Barkis, Ranking Minority Member; Eslick, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Robertson, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Volz, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Berry, Chapman, Dent, Donaghy, Duerr, Goehner, Griffey, Hackney, Klicker, Orcutt, Paul, Ramel, Riccelli, Slatter, Sutherland, Valdez, Walsh and Wicks.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 1 member: Representative Entenman.

Staff: Beth Redfield (786-7140).

Background:

Until June 30, 2025, the minimum monthly salary paid to Washington State Patrol (WSP) troopers and sergeants must be competitive with law enforcement agencies within the State of Washington guided by the results of a survey undertaken in the collective bargaining process during each biennium. The salary levels must be guided by the average of compensation paid to the corresponding rank from the police departments and sheriffs' offices of Seattle, King County, Tacoma, Snohomish County, Spokane, and Vancouver. Increases in salary levels for captains and lieutenants must be proportionate to the increases in salaries for troopers and sergeants resulting from the survey.

By December 1, 2024, the Office of Financial Management must report to the Governor and transportation committees of the Legislature on the efficacy of the WSP recruitment and retention efforts.

Both requirements expire June 30, 2025.

Summary of Bill:

The expiration date is eliminated. Requirements will be ongoing relating to setting trooper and sergeant salaries to be competitive with other state law enforcement agencies, conducting salary surveys during the collective bargaining process, and providing proportionate salary increases for captains and lieutenants.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) Four or five years ago, there was a deep assessment of the challenges at the WSP. The study found that the transportation budget was investing a great deal of money in recruiting and training troopers and finding that because of salary, many of the troopers left to go to other agencies because of a substantial pay differential. Over the years there have been a couple of efforts to bring the salaries of troopers to an equivalent of the marketplace. It is particularly challenging now and this is not the only solution for

recruitment and retention. This bill makes sure to send the message to the people in the WSP to remain on the force and, for those who want a career as a state trooper, there is a commitment to making sure they are competitively paid. Throughout history the WSP has experienced many periods when pay and benefits fell substantially behind other law enforcement agencies. Not being competitive with pay reduces the number of applicants and potential troopers go elsewhere for work. The changes made in 2018 to ensure competitiveness made a difference. Attrition rates went down, and even though hiring is still a challenge, at least we compete regarding our pay. Even more today it is important not to fall behind. Substantial numbers of vacancies need to be filled. Additionally, hiring must include diverse applicants to equally represent the communities served. Nearly every other law enforcement agency is facing the same challenges. This will allow the WSP to be competitive in the future. The 2016 Legislature passed House Bill 2872 concerning the recruitment and retention of WSP-commissioned officers. It was instrumental in reversing a downward spiral the agency was experiencing in its ability to recruit new members and prevent current members from leaving and going to other police agencies in Washington. One of the primary sections of the bill was to implement a formula for trooper-based pay to be the average of six police agencies in the state who were actively recruiting our members. This bill simply removes the sunset date at a time when many troopers are leaving the profession or going to other agencies which are paying a large bonus for our highly trained members. It will send a clear message to the men and women of the WSP Troopers Association that the Legislature supports them and the job that they do as first responders and will assure them that their salaries will stay competitive.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Jake Fey, prime sponsor; Jason Linn, Washington State Patrol Lieutenants and Captains Association; and Spike Unruh, Washington State Patrol Troopers Association.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.