
Transportation Committee

HB 1638

Brief Description: Creating a state trooper expedited recruitment incentive program.

Sponsors: Representatives Fey, Barkis, Robertson, Lekanoff, Schmidt, Ramel, Duerr, Timmons, Eslick and Jacobsen.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Creates the State Trooper Expedited Recruitment Incentive Program (Incentive Program).
- Directs the Washington State Patrol (WSP) to establish hiring procedures and an accelerated training program for lateral hires from other law enforcement agencies in Washington.
- Provides bonuses to cadets and lateral hires in two stages: after completion of the WSP Academy or the accelerated training program and after completion of a one-year probation period.
- Requires the Incentive Program to be subject to the collective bargaining process.

Hearing Date: 2/6/23

Staff: Beth Redfield (786-7140).

Background:

The Washington State Patrol (WSP) is responsible for traffic law enforcement, collision investigation, criminal interdiction, terrorism prevention, and motorist assistance on the interstate and state highway systems. The WSP highway field force includes 683 trooper positions. As of September 2022, 187 positions were not filled.

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.

Completion of the WSP Academy is required for all troopers. The academy includes 2 months of arming class, 5 months of trooper basic training, and 2 months of field training. The WSP can generally run four academies in a biennium. Only two classes are funded in the WSP's base budget.

Compensation and personnel matters for troopers are collectively bargained between the state and the troopers' exclusive bargaining representative.

Summary of Bill:

The WSP is directed to develop and implement a State Trooper Expedited Recruitment Incentive Program (Incentive Program) for the purpose of recruiting and filling vacant trooper positions. Recruitment must redouble the effort to create a more diverse workforce and must also provide an accelerated pathway for joining the WSP for individuals who have previously been employed as a General Authority Washington Peace Officer in the State of Washington.

The Incentive Program must include hiring procedures and an accelerated training program for lateral hires from other agencies that recognizes the knowledge and experience of candidates previously employed in law enforcement. The Incentive Program must also include a sign-on bonus for each trooper hired through the program. Each cadet will receive \$5,000 after completion of the WSP Academy and \$5,000 after completion of a one-year probation period. Each lateral hire will receive \$7,500 after completion of the accelerated training program for lateral hires and \$7,500 after completion of a one-year probation period.

The establishment of the Incentive Program is subject to a change to the applicable collective bargaining agreements negotiated with the exclusive bargaining representatives.

Expenditures and eligibility for the Incentive Program are subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this specific purpose.

Two new definitions are provided. "Cadet" is defined as a person employed for the express purpose of receiving the on-the-job training required for attendance at the WSP academy and for becoming a commissioned trooper. "Lateral hire" is defined as an eligible employee previously employed as a General Authority Washington Peace Officer in the State of Washington.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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