

FINAL BILL REPORT

SHB 2357

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Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Establishing a state patrol longevity bonus.

Sponsors: House Committee on Transportation (originally sponsored by Representatives Fey, Barkis, Hutchins, Robertson, Leavitt, Schmidt, Shavers, Nance, Bronoske, Paul, Timmons and Caldier).

House Committee on Transportation
Senate Committee on Transportation

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. Commissioned staff include a field force of 683 trooper positions and an estimated 250 commissioned nonfield force positions supported by the transportation budget. As of November 2023 trooper vacancy rates were estimated at about 23 percent. In 2024, 122 commissioned staff will be eligible for retirement.

The Washington State Patrol Retirement System (WSPRS) is the retirement plan available to commissioned WSP employees. Members can retire at age 55 with five years of service or at any age with 25 years of service. Members are subject to mandatory retirement at age 65 unless they are serving as the Chief.

Compensation and personnel matters for troopers, sergeants, lieutenants, and captains are collectively bargained between their exclusive bargaining representatives and the state.

Summary:

Beginning on July 1, 2024, WSP eligible commissioned employees completing 26 or more years of service are qualified for an annual \$15,000 longevity bonus, on the employee's anniversary date of state employment. The bonus must be paid in four equal quarterly

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.

payments.

Beginning July 15, 2024, the WSP must submit a quarterly report showing the average filled positions in field force trooper positions in comparison to the 683 total authorized field force trooper positions. The quarterly reports must be submitted to the Office of Financial Management and the transportation committees of the Legislature. The authorized field force trooper level may be adjusted in the omnibus transportation appropriations act.

Intent language states that the bonus is time-limited and targeted at retaining senior personnel and is not intended to be included in average final salary for purposes of calculating pension benefits.

Within the WSPRS authorizing statutes, the definition of salary is amended to exclude earnings from the longevity bonus.

By November 1, 2028, the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee (JLARC) must conduct a performance review of the WSP longevity bonus pilot program. The performance review must evaluate, at minimum:

- the program's impact on retention of senior commissioned staff at the WSP;
- the change in vacancies in each of the commissioned staff categories over time;
- an evaluation of optimal commissioned staffing levels at the WSP, including comparisons to other states' field force staffing levels;
- a description of other factors that may be impacting retention and vacancy rates; and
- recommendations for addressing WSP staffing levels, which must include whether to continue the program.

The program expires on June 30, 2029.

Votes on Final Passage:

House	97	0	
Senate	48	0	(Senate amended)
House			(House refused to concur/ asked Senate to recede)
Senate	47	0	(Senate receded)
House	97	0	(House concurred)

Effective: June 6, 2024