

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 2357

As of February 19, 2024

Title: An act relating to establishment of a state patrol longevity bonus.

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).

Brief History: Passed House: 2/12/24, 97-0.

Committee Activity: Transportation: 2/20/24.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Establishes the Washington State Patrol (WSP) longevity bonus program with a bonus of \$15,000 paid to employees achieving 26 or more years of service.
- Expires the WSP longevity bonus program on June 30, 2029.
- Excludes the bonus from the calculation of salary for the purposes of determining pension benefits.
- Requires the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee to conduct a performance review of the WSP longevity bonus pilot program by November 1, 2028.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Staff: Bryon Moore (786-7726)

Background: The Washington State Patrol (WSP) is responsible for traffic law enforcement, collision investigation, criminal interdiction, terrorism prevention, and

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motorist assistance on the interstate and state highway systems. Commissioned staff include a field force of 683 trooper positions and an estimated 250 commissioned non-field force positions supported by the transportation budget. As of November 2023 vacancy rates are estimated at about 23 percent.

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. In 2024, 122 commissioned staff will be eligible for retirement.

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

Summary of Bill: Beginning on July 1, 2024, the WSP is directed to issue \$15,000 annual longevity bonuses to eligible employees completing 26 or more years of service, on the employee's anniversary date of state employment.

Intent language is included that states that the bonus is time-limited and targeted at retaining senior personnel. The WSP longevity bonus program expires on June 30, 2029.

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 must conduct a performance review of the WSP longevity bonus program. The performance review must evaluate, at minimum:

- the 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 WSP longevity bonus program.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.