

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5274

As Passed Senate, March 8, 2023

Title: An act relating to expanding eligibility in certain public employment positions for lawful permanent residents.

Brief Description: Expanding eligibility in certain public employment positions for lawful permanent residents.

Sponsors: Senators Valdez, Dhingra, Keiser, Kuderer, Lias, Nguyen, Nobles, Saldaña, Stanford, Wellman and Wilson, C..

Brief History:

Committee Activity: State Government & Elections: 1/24/23, 1/27/23 [DP, DNP].

Floor Activity: Passed Senate: 3/8/23, 29-19.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Expands eligibility in certain civil service positions to allow lawful permanent residents to apply.
- Removes the requirement that applicants for certain civil service positions must be able to read and write in English.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT & ELECTIONS

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Hunt, Chair; Valdez, Vice Chair; Hasegawa and Kuderer.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senators Wilson, J., Ranking Member; Dozier and Fortunato.

Staff: Danielle Creech (786-7412)

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.

Background: Deputy Prosecuting Attorney Positions. Current law stipulates that the prosecuting attorney may appoint one or more deputies, who shall have the same power in all respects as their principal. Appointments must be made in writing, signed by the prosecuting attorney, and filed in the county auditor's office. Deputies must have the same qualifications required of the prosecuting attorney except that they need not be a resident of the county in which they serve.

Civil Service Positions for City Police, City Firefighters, and the Sheriff's Office. Applicants for any kind of civil service for city police, city firefighters, or the sheriff's office must be a citizen of the United States or a lawful permanent resident who can read and write the English language. For civil service applicants for city police or city firefighters, the applicant must also be of an age suitable for the position applied for; in ordinary good health; and of good moral character and of temperate and industrious habits.

Facts regarding applicants' eligibility may be ascertained in a manner deemed advisable by the Civil Service Commission. Applications may be rejected if the agency deems that it does not have the resources to conduct required background investigations.

Fish and Wildlife Officer Positions. Applicants for a fish and wildlife officer position must be a citizen of the United States or a lawful permanent resident who can read and write the English language. Applicants must also meet the minimum standards for employment with the department, including successful completion of a psychological examination and polygraph examination.

Summary of Bill: Deputy Prosecuting Attorney Positions. Deputies appointed by the prosecuting attorney do not need to be qualified electors. Deputies may be a citizen of the United States or a lawful permanent resident.

Civil Service Positions for City Police, City Firefighters, and the Sheriff's Office. Applicants for any kind of civil service for city firefighters, city police, and the sheriff's office are not required to be able to read and write the English language.

Fish and Wildlife Officer Positions. Applicants for a fish and wildlife officer position are no longer required to be able to read and write the English language.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: This bill gives job access to people who are

qualified but have previously been excluded from applying. With current job shortages and not enough workers to fill the roles, this intends to expand the pool of candidates. It expands applications to legal residents and waives some language requirements. They still have to meet the minimum requirements of the job.

OTHER: This bill builds off legislation in 2018 to ensure lawful permanent residents have eligibility for civil service and enhances inclusiveness for those applicants. With some adjustments in language, this bill can promote diversification of Washington's public service by encouraging and highlighting bilingualism and multilingualism.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Javier Valdez, Prime Sponsor.

OTHER: Taylor Gardner, WA Assn of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.