

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 1638

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Transportation, April 4, 2023

Title: An act relating to the creation of a state trooper expedited recruitment incentive program.

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

Sponsors: House Committee on Transportation (originally sponsored by Representatives Fey, Barkis, Robertson, Lekanoff, Schmidt, Ramel, Duerr, Timmons, Eslick and Jacobsen).

Brief History: Passed House: 2/27/23, 94-1.

Committee Activity: Transportation: 3/13/23, 4/04/23 [DPA].

Brief Summary of Amended Bill

- Creates the State Trooper Expedited Recruitment Incentive Program (STEIP).
- Allows the Washington State Patrol (WSP) to establish hiring procedures and an accelerated training program for lateral hires from other law enforcement agencies in Washington.
- Authorizes bonuses for cadets and lateral hires subject to amounts and provisions in the omnibus transportation appropriations act.
- Subjects STEIP to the collective bargaining process.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Liias, Chair; Lovick, Vice Chair; Shewmake, Vice Chair; King, Ranking Member; Holy, Assistant Ranking Member; Cleveland, Fortunato, Hawkins, Kauffman, Lovelett, MacEwen, Nobles, Padden, Randall, Valdez, Wilson, C. and Wilson, J..

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.

Staff: Bryon Moore (786-7726)

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.

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

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

Summary of Amended Bill: WSP is directed to develop and implement a State Trooper Expedited Recruitment Incentive Program (STEIP) for 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 WSP for individuals who have previously been employed as a General Authority Peace Officer.

STEIP may 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. STEIP may also include a sign-on bonus or other bonus for each trooper hired through the program. Expenditures and eligibility for STEIP are subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this specific purpose. The specific amounts, requirements, and other provisions related to the bonus policy for cadet hires or lateral hires are subject to applicable provisions as set forth in an omnibus transportation appropriations act.

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

EFFECT OF TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE AMENDMENT(S):

- Removes provisions specifying the dollar amounts for the cadet and lateral hire bonuses, including provisions related to when the individuals would receive the bonuses.
- Makes the specific amounts, requirements, and other provisions related to the bonus policy for cadet hires or lateral hires subject to applicable provisions as set forth in an omnibus transportation appropriations act.
- Makes other conforming changes.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Substitute House Bill: *The committee recommended a different version of the bill than what was heard.* PRO: This is about trying to solve the problems of less people applying to be part of the State Patrol, fewer people qualifying even after they apply, and trying to remain competitive with other local law enforcement agencies are offering bonuses. The impact of the extraordinarily higher number of trooper vacancies is less service to the public and greater public safety risk to the people driving on the state's roadways. The salary increases and indexing to the six largest local law enforcement implemented 6 years ago helped make the State Patrol more competitive. Now in wake of police protests and other issues, the State Patrol is once again facing recruitment and retention challenges. This is a unique bill that attempts to address the unprecedented challenges facing the State Patrol. The lateral focus will help us recruit from a different area than in the past. This is also a continuation of the recruitment and outreach to women and people of color. No one bill is going to solve this problem, but this provides one more tool to attract people to law enforcement.

CON: There has been a drop in those interested becoming law enforcement which reflects a core problem that needs to get addressed. Law enforcement is not a low wage employment area and bonuses are therefore not needed and will likely be ineffective. If this results in fewer quality recruits being attracted to law enforcement. There are more effective public policies that get at root causes rather than simply throwing money at the problem.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Jake Fey, Prime Sponsor; Mark Johnson, Washington Retail Association; Davor Gjurasic, WSP Troopers Association; Jeff DeVere, Washington State Patrol Lieutenants and Captains Association (WSPLCA).

CON: Enoka Herat, ACLU of WA.

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