

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5224

As of January 20, 2025

Title: An act relating to officer certification definitions, processes, and commissioning.

Brief Description: Concerning officer certification definitions, processes, and commissioning.

Sponsors: Senators Lovick and Shewmake; by request of Criminal Justice Training Commission.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Law & Justice: 1/21/25.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Specifies that certified peace officers and certified corrections officers must undergo background checks when moving to new agencies and positions within Washington.
- Removes a requirement for an administrative law judge to issue a proposed recommendation to the the five-member panel in a certification revocation hearing for a certified peace officer or corrections officer.
- Makes technical language changes.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LAW & JUSTICE

Staff: Kevin Black (786-7747)

Background: The Criminal Justice Training Commission (CJTC), created in 1974, establishes standards for and provides training to criminal justice professionals, including peace officers and local corrections officers. Certification by CJTC, a process which requires a background check, is a condition of employment for peace officers and local corrections officers.

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.

CJTC may on its own initiative, or by request of an officer's employer, convene a hearing to deny, suspend, or revoke the certification of an officer, or require remedial training for the officer. Such a hearing is presided over by an administrative law judge who makes evidentiary rulings and issues a proposed recommendation. The findings and decision at the hearing is made by a five-member panel, consisting of:

- a police chief or sheriff from an agency which is neither a current or former employer of the officer;
- a peace officer or corrections officer below the level of first line supervisor with at least ten-years experience;
- a civilian member of the commission;
- a member of the public who is not a prosecutor, defense attorney, judge, or law enforcement officer; and
- a person with expertise and background in police accountability who is not a current or former peace officer or corrections officer.

Summary of Bill: An applicant for employment as a peace officer or reserve officer must submit to a background investigation when moving from one Washington law enforcement or corrections agency to another, or moving from a certified peace officer position to a certified corrections officer position, or vice versa.

A requirement for an administrative law judge to issue a proposed recommendation in a hearing for denial, suspension, or revocation of peace officer or corrections officer certification prior to the ruling of the five-member hearing panel is removed.

Language enabling the CJTC to appoint railroad police officers is removed; the extent of the CJTC's power is to commission these officers.

Technical language changes are made and definitions created for the following terms: certified, commissioned, and limited authority Washington law enforcement agency.

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.