

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 1638

As of March 13, 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.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Creates the State Trooper Expedited Recruitment Incentive Program (STEIP).
- Directs the Washington State Patrol (WSP) to establish hiring procedures and an accelerated training program for lateral hires from other law enforcement agencies in Washington.
- Provides one bonus to cadets and lateral hires after completion of the WSP Academy or the accelerated training program, and an additional bonus after completion of a one-year probation period.
- Subjects STEIP to the collective bargaining process.

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 motorist assistance on the interstate and state highway systems. The WSP highway field

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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 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 must 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 must also include a sign-on bonus for each trooper hired through the program. Each cadet will receive \$5,000 after completion of the WSP Academy and \$5,000 after completion of a one-year probation period. Each lateral hire will receive \$7,500 after completion of the accelerated training program for lateral hires and \$7,500 after completion of a one-year probation period.

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

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: 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.