

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5089

As of January 19, 2021

Title: An act relating to peace officer hiring and certification.

Brief Description: Concerning peace officer hiring and certification.

Sponsors: Senators Kuderer, Pedersen, Darneille, Das, Dhingra, Hasegawa, Hunt, Liias, Nguyen and Wilson, C..

Brief History:

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

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires applicants for a city or county police officer, or Washington State patrol officer, to be at least 23 years of age and have a degree equivalent to an Associate of Arts or Science degree.
- Requires a 24 month probationary period for newly hired city and county police officers and Washington State patrol officers.
- Awards applicants for a police officer position a maximum of an additional 10 percent on any competitive examination for specified skills or experience.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LAW & JUSTICE

Staff: Shani Bauer (786-7468)

Background: City and County Police Officers. Most city and county police employees are classified civil service employees. An applicant for a position with civil service must be a citizen of the United States, or lawful permanent resident, who can read and write the English language. Civil service with a city additionally requires the applicant be of an age suitable for the position applied for, in ordinary good health, of good moral character, and

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of temperate and industrious habits.

The probationary period for a new hire must be between three and six months.

Washington State Patrol. The Chief of the Washington State Patrol (WSP) is responsible for appointing a sufficient number of competent persons to act as WSP officers. Before a person may be appointed, the person must meet the minimum standards for employment with the WSP, including successful completion of a background investigation.

Newly appointed or promoted officers are required to serve a probationary period of one year after appointment or promotion.

Veteran Scoring Criteria. Competitive examinations for public employment or at private companies or agencies contracting with the state are on a 100-point scale. An eligible veteran receives an added percentage to their score based on the veteran's status. A veteran who served during a period of war or armed conflict and does not receive military retirement is eligible for a 10 percent increase. A veteran who did not serve during a period of war but is receiving military retirement benefits is eligible for a 5 percent increase. A veteran who is called to active military service from employment with the state is eligible for a 5 percent increase until the first promotion.

Summary of Bill: City and County Police Officers. An applicant for a position with a city or county law enforcement agency must be at least 23 years of age and have a degree equivalent to an Associate of Arts or Science degree. The probationary period for a law enforcement officer must be no less than 24 months from the date of successful completion of the basic law enforcement academy or from the date of hire if academy training is not required.

Competitive examinations for employment with a law enforcement agency are on a 100-point scale. An applicant is eligible for a 10 percent increase for any of the following qualifications:

- proficiency in a language other than English;
- two or more years of professional or volunteer experience in the Peace Corps, AmeriCorps, domestic violence counseling, mental or behavioral health care, homelessness programs, or other social services profession; or
- completion of training in a reputable crisis intervention program.

Washington State Patrol. A person appointed as a WSP officer must be at least 23 years of age and have a degree equivalent to an Associate of Arts or Science degree. The probationary period for a WSP officer must be no less than 24 months from the date of successful completion of the basic law enforcement academy, or from the date of hire if academy training is not required.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 18, 2021.

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

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