

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 6181

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As Reported by Senate Committee On:  
Law & Justice, January 25, 2024

**Title:** An act relating to law enforcement officer definition.

**Brief Description:** Concerning law enforcement officer definition.

**Sponsors:** Senator Liias.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Law & Justice: 1/22/24, 1/25/24 [DP].

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Creates identical law enforcement definitions for reserve officer and specially commissioned officer.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON LAW & JUSTICE

**Majority Report:** Do pass.

Signed by Senators Dhingra, Chair; Trudeau, Vice Chair; Padden, Ranking Member; Kuderer, McCune, Pedersen, Salomon, Torres, Valdez, Wagoner and Wilson, L..

**Staff:** William Bridges (786-7312)

**Background:** Mutual Aid Peace Officers Powers Act. The Mutual Aid Peace Officers Powers Act (Act) authorizes law enforcement agencies to contract with each other to provide mutual assistance without regard to normal territorial limitations. The Act contains definitions of specially commissioned officer and reserve officer.

Criminal Justice Training Commission. The Criminal Justice Training Commission (CJTC) establishes the certification standards and process for peace officers and other law enforcement personnel. It also provides training and educational programs, including

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operating the mandatory training academy for all city and county entry-level peace officers in the state. State law, which governs CJTC, also includes definitions of specially commissioned officer and reserve officer.

Different Definitions of Reserve Officers. Reserve officers work for general authority law enforcement agencies on a part-time basis and are a subset of specially commissioned officers. In 2021, as part of legislation expanding the CJTC's oversight authority, definitions of reserve officer and specially commissioned officer were added to state law. Those definitions are different from the ones in the Act.

**Summary of Bill:** Creating Identical Definitions of Reserve Officer and Specially Commissioned Officer. Inconsistent definitions of reserve officer and specially commissioned officer in the Act and state law governing the CJTC are resolved by using the definitions in the Act.

**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: The bill is needed to fix definitions in two different RCW chapters that contradict each other. The bill will resolve a definitional ambiguity, which may classify municipal park rangers and animal control officers as peace officers that require commissioned peace officer training. Persons employed by public higher education institutions and K-12 school systems to provide security should also be removed from the definition of specially commissioned Washington peace officers. Definitions in other RCW chapters regarding limited authority Washington peace officers should also be addressed.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Senator Marko Liias, Prime Sponsor; Andy Illyn, Mukilteo Police Department; Lacey Ledford, Washington State Criminal Justice Training Commission; James McMahan, WA Assoc Sheriffs & Police Chiefs; Leslie Cushman, Washington Coalition for Police Accountability.

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