

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2947

As Reported by House Committee On:
Criminal Justice & Corrections

Title: An act relating to clarifying and making technical amendments to the prehire screening process for law enforcement applicants.

Brief Description: Clarifying and making technical amendments to the prehire screening process for law enforcement applicants.

Sponsors: Representatives McDonald, Ericks and Dunn.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Criminal Justice & Corrections: 2/2/06 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Makes technical amendments to the statutory language regarding the prehire screening process for law enforcement applicants.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CRIMINAL JUSTICE & CORRECTIONS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 7 members: Representatives O'Brien, Chair; Darneille, Vice Chair; Pearson, Ranking Minority Member; Ahern, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Kirby, Strow and Williams.

Staff: Yvonne Walker (786-7841).

Background:

In 2005, the Legislature passed HB 1081 (Chapter 434 of the laws of 2005) that required all new full-time, part-time, and returning reserve officers to pass a psychological and polygraph test (or any similar procedure) as a condition of continued employment as a peace officer.

Each county, city, or state hiring law enforcement agency must require that every law enforcement officer applicant who has been offered a conditional offer of employment and every returning reserve officer who has been out of work for more than two years, to take and successfully pass a psychological and polygraph examination. The psychological examination must be administered by a Washington licensed psychiatrist or psychologist. Although additional tests may be administered at the option of the hiring law enforcement agency, at a minimum, the psychological exam must consist of a standardized clinical test that: (1) complies with accepted psychological standards; and (2) is widely used as an objective

clinical screening tool for personality and psychosocial disorders. The polygraph examination or similar assessment must be administered by an experienced polygrapher who is a graduate of a polygraph school accredited by the American Polygraph Association.

The hiring law enforcement agency is authorized to require those applicants taking the psychological and polygraph tests to pay a portion of the testing fee based on the actual cost of the test or \$400, whichever is less. In addition, the hiring entity may establish a payment plan for those instances where an applicant may not readily have the means to pay for his or her portion of the testing fee.

The Criminal Justice Training Commission must deny peace officer certification to any officer that has lost his or her certification as a result of a break in law enforcement work of more than two years and has failed to pass the psychological and polygraph tests.

Summary of Bill:

Technical amendments and other clarifications are made to the statutory language relating to the prehire screening process for law enforcement applicants. Statutory language authorizing polygraphers to administer "other similar assessments" to polygraph examinations is deleted.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: Last year, HB 1081 as passed by the Legislature stated that a polygraph examiner would administer other types of tests such as a voice recognition test. Polygraph examiners do not administer such tests and as a result this bill is cleaning up that language.

Testimony Against: None.

Persons Testifying: Michael Parsons, Criminal Justice Training Commission.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.