



State of Connecticut

Police Officer Standards and Training Council

Connecticut Police Academy



Public Safety and Security Committee

Tuesday, February 24, 2009

To: Senator Andrea L. Stillman, Co-Chairperson
Representative Stephen D. Dargan, Co-Chairperson
All Members of the Public Safety and Security Committee

From: Thomas E. Flaherty
Executive Director
Police Officer Standards and Training Council

Date: February 24, 2009

Subject: Testimony in Opposition to Raised Bill No. 6454

Good Morning.

My name is Thomas E. Flaherty, Executive Director of the Police Officer Standards and Training Council and I am here to speak in opposition to Raised Bill No. 6454. I have spent in excess of 43 years in law enforcement, 38 of which were spent in the Milford Police Department, the last 18 years of which I was Chief of Police. I have been the Executive Director at POST in excess of five years.

Among the powers of the Police Officer Training and Standards Council granted by Sec. 7-294d of the General Statutes of Connecticut are the following:

- (10) "To establish uniform minimum educational and training standards for employment as a police officer in full-time positions, temporary or probationary positions and part-time or voluntary positions;"
- (8) "To require that each police officer satisfactorily complete at least forty hours of certified review training every three year in order to maintain certification, unless the officer is granted additional time not to exceed one year to complete such training by the council;" The forty hour minimum was expanded by the Council to a current requirement of 60 hours.

Sec. 7-294e of the General Statutes of Connecticut provides:

- (a) "Notwithstanding the provisions of any general statutes or special act or local law, ordinance or charter to the contrary, each police officer shall forfeit his appointment and position unless recertified by the council according to procedures and within the time frame established by the council."
- (b) "The Police Officer Standards and Training Council may adopt any regulations it deems necessary to carry out the provisions of section 7-294a, subsection (a) of section 7-294b, sections 7-294c, 7-294d and this section in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 54," etc.



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Sec. 7-294e-1(a)(5) of the Regulations of the Police Officer Standards and Training Council define a "Chief of Police" as a "police officer who holds a position as the head of a law enforcement unit."

Section 7-294e-2(a) of the Regulations specifies the following:

"A candidate for lateral certification to a position as a police officer in any law enforcement unit within the state shall meet all council entry level requirements. The candidate shall also satisfactorily complete a council approved police basic training program, except when the last appointment to a similar position was:

- (1) Within the state of Connecticut, and
- (2) Followed by at least two years of continuous service as a certified police officer, and
- (3) Interrupted by not more than three years' absence from the law enforcement unit where last appointed."

Entry level requirements as defined in Sec. 7-294e-16 of the Regulations of State Agencies are as follows:

1. A high school diploma or successful completion of a G.E.D. program.
2. Minimum age of 21 years.
3. Be a citizen of the United States.
4. Have a valid motor vehicles operator's license.
5. Passed a validated written test for entry level positions only and is not required for positions other than entry level.
6. Tested by an oral interview panel, one member of which is a Connecticut certified law enforcement officer.
7. Submit to a fingerprint examination, which shall be submitted to the Federal Bureau of Investigation.
8. Undergo a criminal records check to determine if the candidate has been convicted of a felony, Class A Misdemeanor, Class B Misdemeanor or has committed any act which would constitute perjury or false statement.
9. Undergo a background investigation consisting of completion of a personal history, completion of a motor vehicle history check and completion of a polygraph examination.
10. Completion of a psychological examination.
11. Completion of a controlled substance screen.
12. Medical certification forms.
13. Entry level physical fitness testing is mandatory for entry level positions only and is not required for positions other than entry level.

During each three-year cycle of a police officer's recertification, each is required to attend the following training by Statute:

Rape Crisis Intervention.

A minimum of two hours in Domestic Violence.

A minimum of one hour relative to the handling of juvenile matters.

Training on Gang Related Violence.

For Municipal Chief Law Enforcement Officers, training annually in New Legal Developments.

Training relative to Crimes Motivated by Bigotry or Bias.

Additionally, during each recertification three-year period, each officer is required to attend 9 hours of firearms training, 3 hours of Human Relations training and 2 hours of Patrol Procedures.

These mandatory hours total 28, each three-year cycle and elective hours total 32 over the three-year period for a total of 60 hours.

In summary, Connecticut statutes define a Chief of Police as a police officer. To be appointed a Chief of Police by lateral entry, i.e., to go from one agency in this state to another; by Comparative Certification, i.e., to come from an out of state agency into an agency within the State of Connecticut, a candidate must comply with the entry level standards cited above except for the physical fitness testing and the completion of a validated written examination.

If the candidate is a lateral entry candidate from within this state and they have a period of service interrupted by not more than three years' absence from the law enforcement unit where last appointed, they would not be required to complete a recruit level academy.

"The certification of any police officer who is not employed by a law enforcement unit for a period of time in excess of two years, unless such officer is on leave of absence, shall be considered lapsed. (Sec. 7-294d(20)(c).

Certification is NOT transferable from department to department without completing the entry level requirements.

These statutes and regulations have been developed since the early seventies and they are applied consistently and fairly, whether a candidate originates from in-state or out-of-state. They have served to preserve the ethics and integrity in Connecticut law enforcement that the public demands, expects and deserves.

Sometimes, in spite of these statutes and regulations, sworn police officers have engaged in misconduct while employed in one agency and then attempted to go to another law enforcement agency. Compliance with the entry level standards is the only way to discover this misconduct when it occurs.

These standards apply to all sworn law enforcement officers and if they are compromised in any way for one rank or one position, there will be a cascade effect throughout the ranks of law enforcement to other ranks, other positions and for other justifications.

If the Legislature is inclined to enact legislation in this area, then you should consider giving POST the authority to waive certain re-training requirements on a case-by-case basis.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.