



# State of Connecticut

## Police Officer Standards and Training Council

### Connecticut Police Academy



### Proposed Bill No. 6295

#### An Act Concerning Lateral Transfers of Police Officers

As Executive Director of the Police Officer Standards and Training Council and a representative of the Council's Legislative Committee, I have been authorized to speak in opposition to this Bill.

Sec. 7-294e-1 of the Regulations of State Agencies defines "Lateral certification" as the certification of a currently certified police officer to a new position as a police officer with a different law enforcement unit within the state.

Sec 7-294e-2. Eligibility for Lateral Certification or Comparative Certification – requires that "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."

Over a long period of time, the Council has established entry level standards to ensure that police officer applicants comply with the entry level standards whether those applicants are new police recruits, lateral applicants from another in state agency or applicants from an out of state agency or from an in state agency who is exempt from certification requirements. These standards have been adopted to permit hiring of candidates who are expected to perform with honesty, integrity and in the best interests of their employing agencies.

Should this bill be enacted exempting standards for lateral certification candidates, the hiring authorities would be precluded from developing accurate information about whether or not a candidate should be offered employment in the law enforcement field.

These standards have been applied to lateral certification candidates to ensure that police officers who transfer have not engaged in illegal or unethical conduct, which may be unknown to their previous employer, before employment at a new agency.

I will point out the critical selection standards that develop information absolutely required for a hiring decision in a police agency.

1. An applicant must have a valid license to operate a motor vehicle from this state or another and his or her right to operate a motor vehicle is not suspended. Without this standard, hiring agencies would not have this information available.
2. An applicant must have been interviewed by a Personal Interview Panel including one or more Connecticut POST certified law enforcement officers. If this entry level standard did not apply, a hiring agency might be subjected to the impact of a political decision and/or might not be able to determine the knowledge, expertise and experience of the lateral candidate.



3. A fingerprint examination submitted to the F.B.I. This ensures that a candidate for instance has not been arrested in another jurisdiction but unknown to the hiring authority.
4. A candidate must undergo a criminal records check in order to reveal if that candidate has a criminal record under federal or state law for a felony, Class A or Class B Misdemeanor or any misdemeanor crime involving domestic violence or who has committed any act which constitutes perjury or false statement. The impact of not doing this is apparent.
5. A candidate must be the subject of a background investigation that includes the completion of a personal history and a check to ascertain whether the candidate has a record of motor vehicle law conviction for operating a motor vehicle under the influence of intoxicating beverages or narcotics or controlled substances or evasion of responsibility. It is very likely that someone could have such a conviction with it being unknown to the current employer and certainly might not be discovered by the prospective employer.
6. The background investigation includes the completion of a polygraph examination. This process permits the hiring agency to determine information which simply may not be available about the applicants conduct from any other source.
7. The background investigation also includes the completion of a psychological examination. There have been cases where incumbent police officers have suffered emotional or psychological anomalies that have led to performance issues and eventual resignation or termination from the employing agency.
8. A candidate is required to have a controlled substance screen indicating no presence of a controlled substance not prescribed. Once again, the reasoning underlying this standard is apparent.
9. Lastly, of the critical standards, an applicant must certify under oath that they have been truthful in the process. Any conduct which constitutes perjury, false statement or tampering with physical evidence would preclude the hiring of such candidates. The Legislature, not too long ago, included this type of conduct as a basis for decertification of a police officer.

In conclusion, there have been incidents, some in the fairly recent past where actively employed police officers have engaged in misconduct, some on duty and some off and that misconduct has led to their discipline, resignations or dismissal. If this Bill were enacted, conceivably, a hiring authority might not ever discover this activity.