

February 15, 2011

State of Connecticut
Public Safety & Security Committee
Public Hearing, Proposed Senate Bill #418

Ladies & Gentlemen;

Thank you for this opportunity.

Some time ago I spoke to Senator Martin Looney about what I felt were some changes that should be made to Section 7-294 of the Connecticut General Statutes, regarding Police Officer Certification. I also provided him with a narrative of those thoughts. I have emailed the members of this committee a copy of that narrative.

My feeling is that there is a need for changes in the state statutes regarding the certification of all law enforcement officers in this state.

The two areas that I'll address are:

- 1. Retired police personnel maintaining their POST certification.
- 2. State Police officers not being POST certified.

BACKGROUND

Our Federal Government has set the pace, when it comes to retired police officers, under the Law Enforcement Officers Safety Act of 2004. The law allows retired police officers to carry concealed firearms throughout the United States and its Territories, under Title 18, Chapter 44, Section 926C.

With the same concept in mind, if retired officers are allowed to **maintain** their certification, any police department in the state, in a time of emergency, can utilize them in an official, sworn capacity.

Additionally, there sometimes comes a point in time when a retired police officer would like to apply for a position of Police Chief or Assistant or Deputy Police Chief or even apply to reenter the law enforcement field in another sworn capacity.

At this point in time the Connecticut Statute states that, anyone who wants to become or remain a sworn police officer in the state of Connecticut, **with the exception of the Connecticut State Police Department**, must be certified by the Police Officer Standards and Training Council (POST). And according to Thomas Flaherty, the Executive Director of the Police Officer Standards & Training Council, **“Certification is contingent upon active employment in a law enforcement unit”**.

This is not a problem if the retired officer is still within the time limit of his/her last certification. If the certification has lapsed, POST can allow the applicant to fulfill the POST requirements within one year of hire. That may require the applicant to return to a certified police academy and complete entry-level training within one year. This applies to all sworn positions, up to and including police administration, i.e. Police Chief.

POST certification and re-certification standards must be consistent throughout the state of Connecticut including the state police department.

You may not be aware that the Connecticut Department of Public Safety, State Police are not required to be certified by POST although ALL other police officers in the state of Connecticut must be POST certified.

It would appear that police officers require the same knowledge of the state motor vehicle laws and criminal laws regardless of which city or town they work in.

State of Connecticut motor vehicle statutes and criminal statutes apply the same in cities as they do on the state's highways.

In fact there are some towns in the state of Connecticut where there is a State “Resident” Trooper assigned to patrol the streets, Just like a local police officer would. In some of those towns there are also Special Constables employed who are required to be POST certified.

That would appear to be a double standard. Why would a state trooper, who is not POST certified work in a local setting where if that town had their own police force, their officers would have to be POST certified?

SUMATION

Any police officer that retires in good standing and without a disqualifying injury should be allowed to maintain their POST certification.

Retired officers should be allowed to apply to any POST certified training academy or facility or POST approved instructor, for a seat in a scheduled training session to maintain their certification.

When an officer in good standing retires, the police department should notify the officer of the opportunity to maintain POST certification.

The cost of each training course would be the responsibility of the applicant.

1. POST should establish a standardized fee schedule for all required courses.
2. The fee should be reasonable and affordable.
3. POST should advertise said fee schedule annually.

These are my thoughts. I hope you will consider these thoughts and support a change in the statutes.

I will be happy to answer your questions.

Thank you for your time and opportunity to present my thoughts.

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