Bill No.: HB-7242
Title: AN ACT CONCERNING POLICE OFFICERS AT INDEPENDENT INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION.
Vote Date: 3/19/2019
Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute
PH Date: 3/7/2019

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SPONSORS OF BILL:
Public Safety Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:
The bill allows The Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP) commissioner to review the application of certain independent institutions of higher education for approval to have sworn police officers on staff. It serves to allow Universities to have “hybrid” police departments with Police Officer Standard and Training Council (P.O.S.T) certified officers on campus. The goals of this new department are; to have quicker responses, allow students to be familiar with the officers, and take the burden off municipalities the universities reside in.

***Proposed Substitute Language

The language states that officers appointed as police at independent institutions of higher education to be certified by the Police Officer Standards and Training Council (POST), and officers and units at the institutions to comply with POST standards and policies.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:
None

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:
Neville A. Brooks, Retired Deputy Chief, Hartford P.D.
He speaks to his experience as a former deputy police chief, and having worked with many university public safety departments. He testifies that by letting the universities, specifically
Quinnipiac, police within themselves it would take the burden of resources and personnel off the municipalities. Additionally, in the event off an active shooter you need an effective response, which requires a plan of action and timeliness.

**Gary MacNamara, Executive Director of Public Safety & Government Affairs, Sacred Heart University**

He testifies that Sacred Heart University (SHU) employs 46 unarmed, non-sworn public safety officers. Having uniform training standards will decrease liability, by having P.O.S.T training. Having access to higher levels of information and databases will help to prevent incidents. The officers would be able to conduct traffic safety initiatives. By having officers on campus it will help create a positive report with students. He then testifies that “Currently, an institution of higher education may enter into an agreement with a local municipality to request sworn powers. However, for an institution such as the Sacred Heart University that operates in more than one municipality, this might pose a challenge.”

**Edgar Rodriguez, Associate Vice President and Chief of Public Safety, Quinnipiac University**

He states that Quinnipiac (QU) has over 10,000 students with over 600 acres of space across three campuses, in two towns. All armed public safety officers at QU are non-sworn. The university gained authority to carry firearms in 2014 through the CT State Police Licensing and Firearms unit. QU employs many former law enforcement officers, including three full-time law enforcement trainers. He then testifies that this bill would allow QU to transition to a sworn agency, having a hybrid police force would make things much safer. Additionally, it would enhance the level of service, more prompt responses, getting notified by local police, providing access to P.O.S.T training, and improving career paths for officers. He lastly goes on to cite the large number of local universities with certified police departments, and the increased liability of having a public safety department as opposed to a police department.

**NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:**

None

**Reported by: Assistant Clerk Don Cretella Date: 3/28/19**