OLR Bill Analysis
sSB 1009

AN ACT REQUIRING SOCIAL MEDIA POLICIES FOR POLICE DEPARTMENTS.

SUMMARY

This bill requires the Police Officer Standards and Training Council to develop, by January 1, 2022, a model policy on the use of social media by law enforcement units and police officers while they are on duty. The policy must include:

1. guidelines on using a unit’s social media account,
2. the responsibilities of any unit employee who manages and approves content to post on a unit’s account,
3. procedures when the unauthorized use of a unit’s account is detected,
4. guidelines to ensure compliance with applicable state or federal law,
5. guidelines on what is and is not suitable for posting on a unit’s account, and
6. methods to limit indecent or obscene content on a unit’s account.

By July 1, 2022, the bill requires each law enforcement unit to adopt and maintain a written policy that meets or exceeds the model policy’s standards.

By law and under the bill, “social media” is an electronic medium where users may create and view user-generated content, such as uploaded or downloaded videos or photographs, blogs, video blogs, podcasts, or instant messages (CGS § 9-601). Additionally, “law
enforcement unit” is any state or municipal agency or department (or tribal agency or department created and governed under a memorandum of agreement) whose primary functions include enforcing criminal or traffic laws; preserving public order; protecting life and property; or preventing, detecting, or investigating crime. Lastly, “police officers” are sworn members of an organized local police department or the State Police; appointed constables who perform criminal law enforcement duties; special police officers appointed under law (e.g., those appointed to investigate public assistance fraud); or any members of a law enforcement unit who perform police duties (CGS § 7-294a).

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

COMMITTEE ACTION
Public Safety and Security Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute
Yea 14  Nay 11  (03/18/2021)