

OFFICE OF FISCAL ANALYSIS

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SB-421

AN ACT CONCERNING LAW ENFORCEMENT RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION.

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact:

Agency Affected	Fund-Effect	FY 25 \$	FY 26 \$
Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection	GF - Cost	7.5 million - 15 million	7.5 million - 15 million
Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection	GF - Cost	Potential Significant	Potential Significant
Resources of the General Fund	GF - Appropriation	500,000	None
Higher Education Constituent Units	Tuition Funds - Revenue Loss	Potential Significant	Potential Significant
Higher Ed., Off.	GF - Cost	Significant	Significant
CHFA	CHFA - Potential Cost/Revenue Impact	See Below	See Below
Comptroller	GF - Cost	50,000	None
State Comptroller - Fringe Benefits ¹	GF - Cost	At least 100,000	At least 100,000

Note: GF=General Fund; CHFA=Resources of CHFA

Municipal Impact:

Municipalities	Effect	FY 25 \$	FY 26 \$
Hartford; New Haven; Waterbury; Bridgeport; Stamford; Greenwich; Norwalk; Danbury; New Britain; West Hartford	Revenue Gain	See Below	See Below
Various Municipalities	Grand List Reduction	None	See Below

¹The fringe benefit costs for most state employees are budgeted centrally in accounts administered by the Comptroller. The estimated active employee fringe benefit cost associated with most personnel changes is 41.25% of payroll in FY 25.

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Various Municipalities	Potential Revenue Gain	See Below	See Below
Various Municipalities	Potential Savings	See Below	See Below
Various Municipalities	Potential Cost	See Below	See Below

Explanation

The bill makes various changes regarding the recruitment and retention of law enforcement officers, resulting in the various impacts described below.

Section 1 requires the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP) to develop a state-wide campaign to promote the law enforcement profession. Section 21 appropriates \$500,000 in FY 25 to DESPP for this purpose.

Section 2 requires DESPP to employ a full-time cadet or explorer program coordinator, resulting in an estimated cost of \$116,000 annually beginning in FY 25. The starting salary of the program coordinator is approximately \$75,000, with associated fringe benefits of \$31,000. There is also an estimated cost of \$10,000 for other expenses, including educational supplies and promotional materials.

This section also requires DESPP to allocate \$5,000 to each municipal police department that operates or plans to operate a cadet or explorer program each year, resulting in a potential cost to the state of up to \$475,000² in FY 25 and FY 26. There is a corresponding potential revenue gain of \$5,000 to each municipal police department that operates or plans to operate a cadet or explorer program each year.

Section 3 requires DESPP to establish a grant program to reimburse municipal police departments for the cost of basic training for police officers, resulting in a cost to the state and savings to municipalities

²As of October 2023, Connecticut has 95 municipal police departments.

ranging from about \$5,000 to \$70,000 per officer.³ Costs will vary widely depending on which expenses the grant covers and how many officers attend basic training. For every 100 officers that attend basic training, the cost can range from \$500,000 to \$7 million each year.

Section 4 requires the Police Officer Standards and Training Council (POST) to examine criminal justice courses offered by colleges and universities in the state, resulting in no fiscal impact to the state because POST has the expertise to meet the requirements of the section.

Section 5 prohibits POST from denying police officer certification and law enforcement units from denying someone employment as a police officer solely because they are a lawful permanent resident noncitizen, resulting in no fiscal impact to the state or municipalities.

Section 6 requires DESPP to provide a grant to each of the top ten most populous municipalities in the state to increase the salaries of police officers serving such municipalities, resulting in a cost to the state ranging from \$7.3 million to \$14.6 million in FY 25 and FY 26. It is estimated that each of these approximately 2440 officers⁴ will receive an additional \$3,000 to \$6,000 annually to make their salaries competitive with surrounding communities. The cost may be reduced if these grants are only applied to starting salaries. The following table shows the estimated revenue gain by municipality:

Municipality	Officers ⁴	Revenue Gain Estimate \$
Hartford	382	1,146,000 - 2,292,000
New Haven	352	1,056,000 - 2,112,000
Waterbury	293	879,000 - 1,758,000
Bridgeport	289	867,000 - 1,734,000
Stamford	273	819,000 - 1,638,000
Greenwich	182	546,000 - 1,092,000
Norwalk	179	537,000 - 1,074,000
Danbury	178	534,000 - 1,068,000
New Britain	162	486,000 - 972,000
West Hartford	150	450,000 - 900,000
Total:	2440	7,320,000 - 14,640,000

³The cost of tuition and fees for a police officer to attend basic training may potentially be as low as \$5,000 per student, while including the cost of uniforms, equipment, and salary while attending training can result in a cost of up to \$70,000 per student.

⁴From Office of Legislative Research Report 2023-R-0265.

Section 7 requires DESPP and POST to jointly submit a report to the Public Safety and Security Committee with recommendations on giving bonuses to encourage people to begin and continue careers as police officers, resulting in no fiscal impact because the agencies have the expertise to meet the requirements of the section.

Section 8 requires the Board of Regents for Higher Education, UConn's Board of Trustees, and POST to jointly submit a report that includes a career pathway and schedule of credits to help police officers earn higher education degrees, resulting in no fiscal impact because the agencies have the expertise to meet the requirements of the section.

Sections 9-11 result in a potentially significant annual revenue loss beginning in FY 25 to the higher education constituent units, associated with waiving tuition for certain police officers and their dependents. The tuition waivers will be available to: (1) a police officer who has at least two years of service as an officer in Connecticut and (2) any dependent child of a police officer who has at least five years of service as an officer in the state.

There are an estimated 8,092 state and local police officers in Connecticut. It is unknown how many individuals will be eligible for the tuition waivers and take advantage of it, or which constituent unit they would choose to attend. The scope of the revenue loss will vary based on the number of waivers and the institution waiving tuition. For example, 500 additional tuition waivers at UConn for the undergraduate level results in a revenue loss of approximately \$8.5 million annually while 1,000 additional community college waivers results in a revenue loss of approximately \$4.6 million annually. To the extent that some of the waiver beneficiaries enrolling in Connecticut State Colleges and Universities institutions might not have otherwise attended, these institutions may experience higher fee and other revenue (e.g., room and board) due to the bill. The exact number of additional waivers that will occur because of the bill is unknown, but the revenue loss to the constituent units may be significant.

Examples of Tuition Waiver Value, FY 25			
# of Students	UConn	CSUs	CT State Community College
Per-Student Value of Undergraduate Tuition Waiver, FY 25	17,012	6,998	4,608
100	1,701,200	699,800	460,800
500	8,506,000	3,499,000	2,304,000
1,000	17,012,000	6,998,000	4,608,000

Section 12 results in a significant annual cost to the Office of Higher Education (OHE) beginning in FY 25 associated with a loan reimbursement program for individuals employed as police officers in Connecticut for at least ten years. Eligible participants may receive an annual grant for up to ten years. The grant may equal up to 10% of their loans and is capped at \$5,000 per year.

OHE does not currently have the funds available to operate this program. The scope of the costs is dependent upon the number of reimbursements awarded annually and the amount of gifts, grants, and donations received for the program (if any). OHE would require one full-time program administrator, resulting in annual salary expenses of approximately \$92,250 and corresponding fringe benefit costs of approximately \$38,053, beginning in FY 25. Additionally, OHE would require up to \$50,000 in FY 25, associated with software and information technology upgrades.

Section 13 exempts \$10,000 in property taxes on property belonging to or held in trust for a police officer who resides in a distressed municipality. This results in a grand list reduction to distressed municipalities beginning in FY 26. A grand list reduction results in a revenue loss given a constant mill rate, however it is likely that a municipality will adjust its mill rate to offset any predicted revenue loss.

According to a 2023 report, 16 of the distressed municipalities had

municipal police departments.⁵ If every one of these police officers received the full exemption, it would result in a cumulative grand list reduction of approximately \$18.9 million. There would be an additional grand list reduction for any state police that also qualified for the exemption.

Section 14 results in potential marketing costs and a minimal revenue impact for the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority (CHFA), beginning in FY 25, to enhance its assistance to police officers who seek to purchase a home in the community where they serve.⁶ To the extent CHFA further reduces home mortgage interest rates for that group beyond the 0.125% discount already offered through its Police Homebuyer Program, CHFA would collect less revenue for each loan. However, such losses may be offset by increased interest income from additional loans to the extent lower interest rates increase demand for CHFA's mortgage products. Regardless, the revenue impact is anticipated to be minimal as the existing police officer program originated just four loans in the years 2017 to 2023. CHFA may incur marketing costs, from its own resources, to promote the program. The actual impact will depend on the way the authority decides to enhance its current assistance and on the number of police officers taking advantage of such assistance per year.

Section 15 will result in a cost of approximately \$50,000 to the Office of the State Comptroller in FY 25 in consulting fees to study retirement options and make police health care coverage recommendations.

Section 16 directs the Governor to enter negotiations to amend any

⁵ According to the Department of Economic and Community Development's 2023 distressed municipalities and Police Office Standards and Training Council data; (1) towns with a municipal police department consist of: Ansonia, Bridgeport, Derby, East Hartford, East Haven, Hartford, Meriden, New Britain, New London, Norwich, Plymouth, Putnam, Torrington, Waterbury, West Haven, and Winchester; and (2) towns without a municipal police department consist of: Chaplin, Griswold, Lisbon, Mansfield, Montville, Sprague, Sterling, Voluntown, and Windham.

⁶ CHFA is a quasi-public authority that issues its own federally tax-exempt and taxable mortgage revenue bonds. The authority primarily pays its operating expenses using funds derived from the excess of interest income from loans over bond interest expenses.

collective bargaining agreement with state police officers to establish conditions for retired officers to return to service, resulting in no fiscal impact to the state or municipalities.

Section 17 requires collective bargaining agreements between municipalities and municipal police officers to allow retired, POST-certified officers to return to part or full-time employment, while collecting a pension, resulting in a potential cost or potential savings to municipalities in FY 25, depending on the extent to which the addition of these officers defrays the current overtime costs of municipalities.

Section 18 creates a task force to study the volunteer police auxiliary force resulting in no fiscal impact to the state because the task force has the expertise to meet the requirements of the bill.

Section 19 requires DESPP to develop a pilot program to provide law enforcement units with unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV), resulting in a one-time cost in FY 25 that will vary widely depending on the scale of the program and number of participating law enforcement units. To administer the program, DESPP will need to hire one emergency management program specialist, resulting in a total cost of \$122,000 (\$83,000 salary, \$34,000 fringe benefits, \$5,000 other expenses).

UAVs used by law enforcement typically cost approximately \$10,000 each but may range in price from \$5,000 to over \$50,000. There are also additional training, software, and equipment expenses that are incidental to purchasing a UAV. The bill does not limit which law enforcement units are eligible to participate in this program, but should ten law enforcement units participate, it is estimated to cost the state at least \$500,000.

Section 20 requires DESPP to administer a police mental health pilot program, resulting in a potential one-time cost in FY 25. DESPP will need to hire consultants or durational staff to develop suitable programming as the agency lacks the required subject matter expertise. The total cost will vary widely based on the scale of the program, which

may be required to address the needs of over 1,500 officers.⁷ The bill requires this program be administered within available resources and does not specify a funding source.

The Out Years

The annualized ongoing fiscal impact identified above would continue into the future subject to the number of grants administered, tuition waivers granted, and property tax exemptions granted, as well as employee wage increases.

The impacts identified in sections 15 and 19-21 are one-time costs and have no out years effect.

Sources: Office of Legislative Research Report 2023-R-0265

⁷The bill limits which law enforcement units are eligible to those with over 300 officers, which currently include Hartford Police Department, New Haven Police Department, and the State Police.