



HOUSE BILL 436: Support Law Enforcement Mental Health.

2021-2022 General Assembly

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| Committee: | | Date: | February 25, 2022 |
| Introduced by: | | Prepared by: | Jessica Boney Staff Attorney |
| Analysis of: | S.L. 2021-136 | | |

OVERVIEW: *S.L. 2021-136 requires an in-person psychological screening examination, if practicable, by a licensed clinical psychologist before employment as a law enforcement officer or criminal justice officer to determine suitability to properly fulfill the responsibilities of the office. If an in-person examination is not practicable, a virtual examination is permitted. S.L. 2021-136 (i) directs all agencies employing certified criminal justice and justice officers to make information about State and local mental health resources easily available to all employees and (ii) creates a study to determine any benefits of ongoing physical fitness training on officers.*

The in-person psychological screening examination requirement became effective January 1, 2022, and applies to applications for law enforcement certification filed on or after that date. The remainder of the act became effective September 2, 2021.

CURRENT LAW: Chapters 17C and 17E of the General Statutes regulate the North Carolina Criminal Justice Education and Training Standards Commission and the North Carolina Sheriffs' Education and Training Standards Commission respectively. The Commissions are responsible for establishing the requirements for the education and training of law enforcement officers throughout the State.

BILL ANALYSIS: House Bill 436 does the following:

- Requires initial and in-service training on effective mental health and wellness strategies for law enforcement.
- Requires an in-person psychological screening examination, if practicable, by a licensed clinical psychologist before employment as a law enforcement officer or criminal justice officer to determine suitability to properly fulfill the responsibilities of the office.
- Permits a virtual examination if an in-person is not practicable.
- Encourages the Commissions to provided training by mental health professionals through in-person instruction.
- Directs all agencies employing certified criminal justice and justice officers, to coordinate with make information about State and local mental health resources easily available to all employees.
- Creates a study to determine any benefits of ongoing physical fitness training on officers.

EFFECTIVE DATE: The in-person psychological screening examination requirement became effective January 1, 2022, and applies to applications for law enforcement certification filed on or after that date. The remainder of the act became effective September 2, 2021.

Jeffrey Hudson
Director



Legislative Analysis
Division
919-733-2578

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BACKGROUND: The House Select Committee on Community Relations, Law Enforcement and Justice met 5 times during the 2019 Regular Session and made many recommendations. One recommendation was to provide law enforcement additional training and resources for encountering mental health issues related to the task of policing.

**Jennifer Bedford, Legislative Analysis Division, substantially contributed to this summary.*