
Transportation Committee

HB 1605

Brief Description: Concerning the establishment of a state patrol longevity bonus.

Sponsors: Representatives Fey, Barkis, Leavitt, Shavers, Bronoske, Schmidt, Ormsby, Davis and Timmons.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires a longevity bonus be paid to Washington State Patrol employees that achieved 26 or more years of commissioned service before July 1, 2024.

Hearing Date: 2/3/25

Staff: Sandy Myer (786-7140).

Background:

The Washington State Patrol (WSP) is responsible for traffic law enforcement, collision investigation, criminal interdiction, terrorism prevention, and motorist assistance on the interstate and state highway systems. Commissioned staff include a field force of 683 trooper positions and an estimated 250 commissioned nonfield force positions supported by the transportation budget. As of November 2024 the estimated vacancy rate was about 23 percent.

The Washington State Patrol Retirement System (WSPRS) is the retirement plan available to commissioned WSP employees. Members of the WSPRS can retire at age 55 after 5 years of service or at any age after 25 years of service. Years of service are calculated relative to the date the employee began service. Members are subject to mandatory retirement at age 65 unless they are serving as the Chief of the WSP.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Compensation and personnel matters for troopers are collectively bargained between the state and the troopers' exclusive bargaining representative.

In 2024 the Legislature established the WSP longevity bonus program (bonus program) whereby eligible commissioned employees who have completed 26 or more years of service are qualified for an annual \$15,000 longevity bonus on the employee's anniversary date of state employment. The bonus program was created effective July 1, 2024. The bonus is paid in four equal quarterly payments. The bonus program expires June 30, 2029.

Summary of Bill:

Eligibility for the bonus program is expanded to include commissioned employees who completed 26 or more years of service before July 1, 2024, and who have been continuously employed by the WSP for at least one year.

Under the expansion, an individual qualifies to receive a one-time retention incentive of \$3,750 for each quarter the employee was continuously employed between the date the law went into effect and the employee's anniversary date. These one-time retention incentive payments must be completed no later than June 30, 2025.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 28, 2025.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.