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Office

H.B. 44
136th General Assembly

Fiscal Note & Local Impact Statement

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Version: As Passed by the House

Primary Sponsors: Reps. J. Miller and K. Miller

Local Impact Statement Procedure Required: No

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Highlights

- If a municipal police department chooses to conduct a training school for prospective officers, as authorized by the bill, they will incur various supply, equipment, and program administration costs. Such costs would differ from municipality to municipality. This provision is permissive.
- Local police departments may see some savings by forgoing the administration of a civil service examination.
- If new chief of police training is offered at locations other than the Ohio Peace Officer Training Academy, appointing political subdivisions may realize a negligible savings in terms of travel and lodging.

Detailed Analysis

Training schools for prospective law enforcement officers

The bill allows municipal police chiefs to conduct training schools for prospective law enforcement officers. These training school programs must align with Ohio Peace Officer Training Academy (OPOTA) standards and cadet qualifications.¹ Police departments that choose to conduct a training school will incur permissive costs related to supplies, equipment, and program administration, including staffing costs. Such costs would differ from municipality to municipality.

¹ OPOTA's basic training curriculum requires a minimum of 740 hours of training. Applicants must pass a criminal background check, physical fitness test, and drug screening to qualify for an academy. To become eligible to be certified, applicants must pass the physical fitness skill assessment and a written examination.

The bill also allows participating departments to compensate perspective officers during the period of training with a “reasonable salary,” which is undefined by the bill.

The bill will have no discernible impact on peace officer training certification work of the Ohio Peace Office Training Commission (OPOTC).

Civil service examinations

Local police departments may see some savings by forgoing the administration of a civil service examination as allowed by the bill. Specifically, the bill allows the Director of Administrative Services (DAS) to suspend, under certain circumstances, the requirement to conduct a civil service examination to fill a vacant classified civil service position in a police department. This exemption does not apply to vacant classified civil service positions that must be filled by promotion. The Director would need to verify that competition is impracticable and the position can best be filled by a person who (1) holds a specialized certification, (2) possesses peculiar and exceptional qualifications, or (3) has completed a police cadet training program through the police department. Local police departments would need to submit satisfactory evidence to the Director to receive a suspension of the requirement. Current law allows the DAS Director to suspend the requirement that an examination be conducted to fill a position where peculiar and exceptional qualifications of a scientific, managerial, professional, or educational character are required. Therefore, DAS could likely absorb the responsibility added under the bill into an existing program of review. The demand for civil service examination suspension requests to fill police department vacancies is unknown.

Training for chiefs of police and for the rank of sergeant and above

The bill modifies requirements for chiefs of police training including the locations where the training may be held and certain exemptions for the training. The bill also allows OPOTC to establish and conduct police officer training courses to be offered to law enforcement officers at or above the rank of sergeant. The bill is not expected to increase costs for the Attorney General or political subdivisions, but rather create certain efficiencies in the management and administration of the required training for newly appointed chiefs of police.

Under the bill, the chief of police training course is required to be conducted at locations and in a manner determined by OPOTC, instead of at OPOTA as under current law. Mandatory training for newly appointed chiefs went into effect in 2018 and had been held at OPOTA’s main campus in London, Ohio, until 2020. The course is currently held in Columbus as a result of the closure of the dormitories and cafeteria at the London campus. OPOTA has six regional training partners. The outcome of permitting the training to be held at one of the regional facilities or centrally in Columbus would create a savings effect for appointing political subdivisions in terms of travel and lodging.

Under current law and unchanged by the bill, all newly appointed chiefs must attend this training within six months of appointment. Exemptions for the training are granted if the newly appointed chief of police meets the following: (a) holds a certificate of completion of such a program in another state, or (b) has satisfactory work experience, a government certification, or a private certification as a chief of police in a state that does not require completion of such a training program.

Statewide, between 50 and 100 new police chiefs are appointed each year by Ohio law enforcement agencies. The cost for the Commission to conduct the 40-hour (five days) training is approximately \$2,000 per class – not accounting for Attorney General employee wages to work the event. Two classes are held annually for a total cost of \$4,000, paid by the Attorney General from the Ohio Law Enforcement Training Fund (Fund 5LR0). These costs primarily are related to instructor fees. There are no registration fees for chiefs of police paid by political subdivisions to offset these costs.