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State of Minnesota

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NINETY-SECOND SESSION

H. F. No. 3581

02/17/2022 Authored by Winkler, Edelson, Her, Noor, Moran and others
The bill was read for the first time and referred to the Committee on Higher Education Finance and Policy

1.1 A bill for an act
1.2 relating to higher education; public safety; establishing a program for highly
1.3 qualified college degree holders to complete their peace officer education and
1.4 training; establishing a peace officer college scholarship program for highly
1.5 qualified high school graduates; appropriating money; proposing coding for new
1.6 law in Minnesota Statutes, chapter 626.

1.7 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:

1.8 Section 1. 626.8516 EXPEDITED PEACE OFFICER EDUCATION AND
1.9 TRAINING PROGRAM.

1.10 Subdivision 1. Establishment; title. A program is established within the Department
1.11 of Public Safety to fund the expedited law enforcement education and training of highly
1.12 qualified college degree holders. The program shall be known as the "expedited peace officer
1.13 education and training program."

1.14 Subd. 2. Purpose; participant qualities. The program is intended to address the critical
1.15 shortage of peace officers in the state. The program shall recruit, educate, and train highly
1.16 qualified college graduates to become licensed peace officers in the state through an expedited
1.17 process. A highly qualified participant shall have a strong moral character and a proven
1.18 commitment to community and public service. In addition, participants should possess
1.19 strong critical thinking, problem-solving, communication, and interpersonal skills.
1.20 Participants must also possess the physical capabilities to perform the duties of a peace
1.21 officer. The program shall strive to include persons from groups that are currently
1.22 underrepresented in policing. Program participants shall represent all regions of the state.

1.23 Subd. 3. Eligibility. To be eligible to participate in the program, a candidate must:

2.1 (1) hold a two- or four-year degree from an accredited college or university;

2.2 (2) be a citizen of the United States;

2.3 (3) submit to a thorough background check, including searches by local, state, and federal
2.4 agencies, to disclose the existence of any criminal record or conduct which would adversely
2.5 affect the performance by the candidate of peace officer duties; and

2.6 (4) possess a valid Minnesota driver's license or, in case of residency therein, a valid
2.7 driver's license from another state, or eligibility to obtain either license.

2.8 Subd. 4. **Application.** The commissioner shall establish and publish an application for
2.9 participation in the program no later than November 1, 2022.

2.10 Subd. 5. **Selection committee; purpose; membership.** (a) The commissioner shall
2.11 convene a selection committee to review applications and make recommendations for
2.12 participation in the program.

2.13 (b) The selection committee shall consist of:

2.14 (1) a peace officer employed by a state law enforcement agency who is appointed by
2.15 the commissioner;

2.16 (2) the executive director of the Peace Officer Standards and Training Board, or a
2.17 designee;

2.18 (3) two citizen members of the Ensuring Police Excellence and Improving Community
2.19 Relations Advisory Council;

2.20 (4) two representatives of the Minnesota Sheriffs' Association, including one sheriff of
2.21 a county outside of the ten-county metropolitan area;

2.22 (5) two representatives of the Minnesota Chiefs of Police Association, including one
2.23 chief of an agency located outside of the ten-county metropolitan area;

2.24 (6) a representative of the Minnesota State Patrol Association; and

2.25 (7) a representative of the Minnesota Police and Peace Officer Association.

2.26 (c) The executive director of the Peace Officer Standards and Training Board shall serve
2.27 as the chair of the selection committee.

2.28 Subd. 6. **Selection process; commencement of coursework and training.** (a) The
2.29 selection committee shall strive to provide opportunities to participate in the program to
2.30 applicants from groups that are currently underrepresented in law enforcement and who
2.31 represent the state's increasingly diverse population.

3.1 (b) For the initial cohort of program participants, the selection committee shall make
3.2 recommendations to the commissioner no later than January 15, 2023.

3.3 (c) The commissioner shall select up to 125 persons to participate in the program each
3.4 fiscal year.

3.5 (d) The commissioner shall select and notify candidates of their selection to participate
3.6 in the initial cohort no later than February 15, 2023.

3.7 (e) The commissioner, in consultation with the presidents of the system campuses
3.8 designated as education providers under subdivision 11, shall establish a date to commence
3.9 coursework and training for the initial cohort of program participants. Coursework must
3.10 commence as soon as practicable, but no later than September 1, 2023.

3.11 (f) The commissioner shall establish future deadlines for the nomination of candidates,
3.12 the selection of participants, and commencement of coursework and training for subsequent
3.13 cohorts. The commissioner shall establish these deadlines, in consultation with the presidents
3.14 of the system campuses designated as education providers under subdivision 11, to ensure
3.15 that institutions providing expedited training under the program have the staff, facilities,
3.16 and resources necessary to provide expedited coursework and training to participants.

3.17 Subd. 7. **Nominations.** Chief law enforcement officers may nominate and recommend
3.18 qualified candidates to participate in the program.

3.19 Subd. 8. **Participant benefits.** Program participants are entitled to the following benefits:

3.20 (1) tuition-free law enforcement education and skills training needed to be eligible for
3.21 licensure as a peace officer;

3.22 (2) a stipend to provide for living expenses while participating in the program;

3.23 (3) forgiveness of student loans incurred for past higher education degrees, to the extent
3.24 the legislature appropriates funds for this purpose;

3.25 (4) a signing bonus when hired by a state law enforcement agency as a peace officer;
3.26 and

3.27 (5) a bonus for being retained after completion of the 18-month probationary period
3.28 provided for in subdivision 14.

3.29 Subd. 9. **Participant obligations.** (a) To enter the program, participants must sign a
3.30 contract agreeing to fulfill the program's requirements and to fulfill the employment
3.31 obligation under subdivision 10. The contract shall provide that a participant who fails to
3.32 meet the requirements of the program without being excused by the commissioner must

4.1 reimburse the state for the amount of state funds expended on the participant. The contract
4.2 shall also include acknowledgment from the participant that the participant was advised of
4.3 the minimum selection standards to become a licensed peace officer in Minnesota.

4.4 (b) To remain in the program, participants must:

4.5 (1) continue to meet the eligibility requirements to participate in the program established
4.6 in subdivision 3;

4.7 (2) achieve passing grades in the required courses;

4.8 (3) complete the required law enforcement skills training;

4.9 (4) make timely progress towards completion of the program;

4.10 (5) pass the Minnesota peace officer licensure exam; and

4.11 (6) actively seek employment as a peace officer with a Minnesota law enforcement
4.12 agency until employed as a peace officer.

4.13 Subd. 10. **Employment obligation.** (a) Beginning within six months of completion of
4.14 the program, a participant must be employed full time in Minnesota as a peace officer.

4.15 (b) A participant must remain continuously employed full time as a peace officer in
4.16 Minnesota for six years after completion of the program.

4.17 (c) The commissioner shall annually verify with the board that program graduates who
4.18 have not fulfilled the total employment obligation are employed as a peace officer by a state
4.19 law enforcement agency.

4.20 (d) The commissioner may approve, on a case-by-case basis, employment in other public
4.21 safety professions for program graduates to satisfy their employment obligation. When the
4.22 commissioner approves a program graduate's request under this paragraph, the graduate
4.23 must annually verify, in a form and manner specified by the commissioner, that the recipient
4.24 is employed in a position that fulfills the employment obligation.

4.25 Subd. 11. **Education providers; sites.** No later than September 1, 2022, the Board of
4.26 Trustees of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities shall designate four regionally
4.27 diverse system campuses to provide the required expedited law enforcement education and
4.28 skills training to participants in the program.

4.29 Subd. 12. **Curriculum.** No later than February 1, 2023, the Board of Trustees of the
4.30 Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, in consultation with the executive director of
4.31 the board, shall develop a curriculum that will provide program participants with the law

5.1 enforcement education and skills training needed to be licensed as a peace officer. The
5.2 curriculum must be designed to be completed in eight months or less.

5.3 Subd. 13. **Job placement assistance; commissioner.** The commissioner shall assist
5.4 program participants in identifying and applying for peace officer positions in the state.

5.5 Subd. 14. **Hiring law enforcement agencies; extended probationary period granted;**
5.6 **reassignment.** The chief law enforcement officer of an agency that hires a program graduate
5.7 shall have 18 months to evaluate the officer's fitness for nonprobationary employment. If
5.8 an agency elects not to offer a program graduate an unrestricted position after the 18-month
5.9 probationary period, the agency shall provide the officer with up to three months of assistance
5.10 in finding another public safety position within Minnesota.

5.11 Subd. 15. **Account established.** An expedited peace officer education and training
5.12 program account is created in the special revenue fund for depositing money appropriated
5.13 to or received by the department for this program. Money deposited in the account is
5.14 appropriated to the commissioner, does not cancel, and is continuously available to fund
5.15 the requirements of this section. The commissioner shall annually transfer a sum to the
5.16 Board of Trustees of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities that is sufficient to
5.17 provide the required education and skills training to program participants.

5.18 Subd. 16. **Definitions.** (a) For purposes of this section, the following terms have the
5.19 meanings given.

5.20 (b) "Board" means the Board of Peace Officer Standards and Training.

5.21 (c) "Commissioner" means the commissioner of the Department of Public Safety.

5.22 (d) "Peace officer" has the meaning given in section 626.84, subdivision 1, paragraph
5.23 (c).

5.24 (e) "Program" means the expedited peace officer education and training program.

5.25 Sec. 2. **[626.8518] PEACE OFFICER COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM.**

5.26 Subdivision 1. **Establishment.** A program is established within the Department of Public
5.27 Safety to provide college scholarships to highly qualified Minnesota high school graduates
5.28 to earn a four-year law enforcement degree from a state college or university. The program
5.29 shall be known as the "peace officer college scholarship program."

5.30 Subd. 2. **Purpose.** The peace officer college scholarship program is intended to recruit,
5.31 educate, train, and mentor highly qualified high school graduates to become licensed peace
5.32 officers in the state. A highly qualified candidate shall demonstrate a strong moral character

6.1 and a commitment to community and public service. In addition, candidates should possess
6.2 advanced critical thinking, problem-solving, communication, and interpersonal skills. The
6.3 program shall strive to include persons from groups that are currently underrepresented in
6.4 policing. Program participants shall represent all regions of the state.

6.5 Subd. 3. **Program eligibility.** To be eligible to participate in the program, a candidate
6.6 must:

6.7 (1) qualify for resident tuition, as defined in section 135A.043;

6.8 (2) be a citizen of the United States;

6.9 (3) submit to a thorough background check, including searches by local, state, and federal
6.10 agencies, to disclose the existence of any criminal record or conduct which would adversely
6.11 affect the performance by the applicant of peace officer duties; and

6.12 (4) be admitted to a state university.

6.13 Subd. 4. **Application; program administration.** (a) The commissioner shall establish
6.14 and publish an application for participation in the scholarship program no later than
6.15 November 1, 2022. For each academic year, the commissioner shall establish the deadline
6.16 for applicants to apply for a scholarship. The commissioner must publish the application
6.17 deadline at least 12 weeks prior to the deadline.

6.18 (b) The commissioner shall establish the guidelines and programming necessary for
6.19 implementing and administering the program, including providing summer law enforcement
6.20 and leadership skills training to participants.

6.21 Subd. 5. **Nominations.** Chief law enforcement officers may nominate up to two
6.22 candidates to receive scholarships under this program each academic year that funding is
6.23 available for scholarships.

6.24 Subd. 6. **Selection committee; membership.** (a) The commissioner shall convene a
6.25 selection committee to review applications and recommend candidates for participation in
6.26 the program.

6.27 (b) The selection committee shall consist of:

6.28 (1) a peace officer employed by a state law enforcement agency, appointed by the
6.29 commissioner;

6.30 (2) the executive director of the Peace Officer Standards and Training Board or a
6.31 designee;

7.1 (3) two citizen members of the Ensuring Police Excellence and Improving Community
7.2 Relations Advisory Council;

7.3 (4) two representatives of the Minnesota Sheriffs' Association, including one sheriff of
7.4 a county outside of the ten-county metropolitan area;

7.5 (5) two representatives of the Minnesota Chiefs of Police Association, including one
7.6 chief of an agency located outside of the ten-county metropolitan area;

7.7 (6) a representative of the Minnesota Police and Peace Officer Association;

7.8 (7) a representative of the Minnesota State Troopers Association; and

7.9 (8) two designees of the Board of Trustees of the Minnesota State Colleges and
7.10 Universities with experience in criminal justice.

7.11 (c) The executive director of the Peace Officer Standards and Training Board shall serve
7.12 as the chair of the selection committee.

7.13 Subd. 7. **Selection process.** (a) The commissioner shall award up to 125 scholarships
7.14 each academic year beginning in the 2023-2024 academic year to students that the selection
7.15 committee recommends to the commissioner. The commissioner shall strive to provide
7.16 opportunities to participate in the program to applicants from groups that are currently
7.17 underrepresented in law enforcement and who represent the state's increasingly diverse
7.18 population. The commissioner must ensure that scholarships are awarded to students from
7.19 all regions of the state.

7.20 (b) The commissioner shall establish deadlines for the nomination of candidates and the
7.21 selection of participants. For the initial cohort of program participants, the selection
7.22 committee shall make recommendations to the commissioner no later than January 15, 2023.
7.23 The commissioner shall select and notify candidates of their selection to participate in the
7.24 initial cohort no later than February 15, 2023. The selection committee shall give preference
7.25 to applicants from groups that are currently underrepresented in law enforcement and who
7.26 represent the state's increasingly diverse population.

7.27 Subd. 8. **Participant benefits.** Program participants are entitled to the following benefits:

7.28 (1) free tuition and fees at a Minnesota state university for up to eight semesters;

7.29 (2) free law enforcement skills training;

7.30 (3) supplemental law enforcement and leadership skills training; and

7.31 (4) a stipend to provide for living expenses while participating in the program.

8.1 Subd. 9. **Participant obligations.** (a) To enter the program, participants must sign a
8.2 contract agreeing to fulfill the program's requirements, to fulfill the employment obligation
8.3 under subdivision 10, and to reimburse the state for failing to complete the program without
8.4 being excused from the program by the commissioner. The contract shall also include
8.5 acknowledgment from the participant that the participant was advised of the minimum
8.6 selection standards to become a licensed peace officer in Minnesota.

8.7 (b) To remain in the program, participants must:

8.8 (1) continue to meet the eligibility requirements to participate in the program established
8.9 in subdivision 3;

8.10 (2) remain in good academic standing and make timely progress toward completion of
8.11 a law enforcement degree as provided for under paragraph (c);

8.12 (3) complete the required law enforcement skills training;

8.13 (4) participate in leadership and peace officer specific training provided by the
8.14 commissioner each summer;

8.15 (5) pass the Minnesota peace officer licensure exam; and

8.16 (6) actively seek employment as a peace officer in a Minnesota law enforcement agency
8.17 until employed as a peace officer.

8.18 (c) A program participant must be enrolled in a law enforcement degree program for at
8.19 least 12 credits per semester at a state university in the Minnesota State Colleges and
8.20 Universities system. A participant must complete their degree in four academic years from
8.21 the date they enter the program, unless the commissioner approves the participant's request
8.22 for an extension or grants an exception to the policy.

8.23 Subd. 10. **Employment obligation.** (a) Beginning within six months of completion of
8.24 the program, a participant must be employed full time in Minnesota as a peace officer.

8.25 (b) A participant must remain continuously employed full time as a peace officer in
8.26 Minnesota for six years after completion of the program.

8.27 (c) The commissioner shall annually verify with the board that program graduates who
8.28 have not fulfilled the total employment obligation are employed as a peace officer by a state
8.29 law enforcement agency.

8.30 (d) The commissioner may approve, on a case-by-case basis, employment in other public
8.31 safety professions for program graduates to satisfy their employment obligation. When the
8.32 commissioner approves a program graduate's request under this paragraph, the person must

9.1 annually verify, in a form and manner specified by the commissioner, that the graduate is
 9.2 employed in a position that fulfills the employment obligation.

9.3 Subd. 11. **Failure to complete degree or satisfy the employment obligation.** If a
 9.4 program participant fails to earn their degree in the time provided, otherwise fails to meet
 9.5 the requirements of the program without being excused from the program by the
 9.6 commissioner, or fails to satisfy the employment obligation, the commissioner must convert
 9.7 the amount of state funds expended on the participant's education and stipend into a student
 9.8 loan and collect from the participant the total amount paid plus interest at a rate established
 9.9 according to section 270C.40.

9.10 Subd. 12. **Job placement assistance; commissioner.** The commissioner shall assist
 9.11 program participants in identifying and applying for peace officer positions in the state.

9.12 Subd. 13. **Account established.** A peace officer college scholarship program account
 9.13 is created in the special revenue fund for depositing money appropriated to or received by
 9.14 the department for this program. Money deposited in the account is appropriated to the
 9.15 commissioner, does not cancel, and is continuously available to fund the requirements of
 9.16 this section. The commissioner shall annually transfer a sum to the Board of Trustees of
 9.17 the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities that is sufficient to provide the required
 9.18 education and skills training to program participants.

9.19 Subd. 14. **Definitions.** (a) For purposes of this section, the following terms have the
 9.20 meanings given.

9.21 (b) "Board" means the Board of Peace Officer Standards and Training.

9.22 (c) "Commissioner" means the commissioner of the Department of Public Safety.

9.23 (d) "Peace officer" has the meaning given in section 626.84, subdivision 1, paragraph
 9.24 (c).

9.25 (e) "Program" means the peace officer college scholarship program.

9.26 Sec. 3. **APPROPRIATIONS; EXPEDITED PEACE OFFICER EDUCATION AND**
 9.27 **TRAINING PROGRAM.**

9.28 Subdivision 1. **Commissioner of public safety; program creation and administration;**
 9.29 **MnSCU transfer.** \$13,000,000 in fiscal year 2023 is appropriated from the expedited peace
 9.30 officer education and training program account in the special revenue fund to the
 9.31 commissioner of public safety to establish and administer the expedited peace officer
 9.32 education and training program.

10.1 Subd. 2. **Public safety; outreach.** \$800,000 in fiscal year 2023 is appropriated from the
10.2 expedited peace officer education and training program account in the special revenue fund
10.3 to the commissioner of public safety to conduct outreach to qualified candidates for the
10.4 expedited peace officer education and training program. The commissioner shall use the
10.5 funds to target and recruit candidates or groups of candidates who meet the program's
10.6 eligibility requirements with an emphasis placed on reaching candidates from groups that
10.7 are currently underrepresented in law enforcement and who represent the state's increasingly
10.8 diverse population. The commissioner shall contract with an agency with proven experience
10.9 and success in targeting and recruiting candidates for specific professions.

10.10 Sec. 4. **APPROPRIATION; PUBLIC SAFETY; TRANSFER TO MNSCU; PEACE**
10.11 **OFFICER COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM.**

10.12 \$2,600,000 in fiscal year 2023 is appropriated from the peace officer college scholarship
10.13 program account in the special revenue fund to the commissioner of public safety to establish
10.14 and administer the peace officer college scholarship program. The commissioner shall use
10.15 a portion of this appropriation to promote the program to students from groups that are
10.16 currently underrepresented in law enforcement and who represent the state's increasingly
10.17 diverse population.