



## Legislative Fiscal Bureau

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Joint Committee on Finance

Paper #665

### State Patrol Recruit Class (DOT -- State Patrol)

[LFB 2013-15 Budget Summary: Page 471, #1]

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#### CURRENT LAW

The Division of State Patrol's primary duty is the enforcement of traffic laws and commercial motor vehicle laws by conducting highway patrols and truck inspections. The State Patrol has 377 law enforcement officers classified as troopers (including ranks of trooper, sergeant, lieutenant, captain, major, and colonel), 112 who are classified as motor carrier inspectors (including ranks of inspector, sergeant, lieutenant, and captain), and the State Patrol superintendent. The State Patrol Academy, housed in a facility at Fort McCoy in Monroe County, is established for the initial training of State Patrol cadets, as well as ongoing training for troopers and inspectors. The Academy also hosts training classes and programs for other state and local law enforcement officers, as well as other state personnel, such as Division of Motor Vehicles employees.

#### GOVERNOR

Provide \$1,369,000 SEG annually to allow the State Patrol to conduct annual recruit training classes for new troopers and inspectors.

#### DISCUSSION POINTS

1. The 2011-13 biennial budget provided \$2,800,000 in 2011-12 for the State Patrol to conduct a State Patrol recruit class in that year, but no ongoing base funding was provided. The bill would provide funding to conduct a recruit class in each year. Since funding for this purpose would be provided in the second year of the biennium, the Division would have ongoing base resources for recruit training courses.

2. The Department indicates that the funding provided by the bill would be used to conduct a class in each year of the biennium. Besides the funding included in this item, the State Patrol could use some base funding, as well as, in 2013-14, funding provided under a separate budget decision item that would add 20 new commercial motor vehicle inspectors. The size and cost of each annual training course will be determined in light of the number of vacancies among troopers and inspectors and other budgetary considerations. While the 2011-12 funding included salary and fringe benefits for post-graduation, the bill would require the State Patrol to fund these costs from within the Division's existing salary and fringe benefits budget.

3. Historically, the State Patrol has generally conducted recruit classes on an annual basis to replace troopers and inspectors who retire or resign. In recent years, however, there have been some years in which no class has been conducted. No recruit classes were conducted, for instance, in 2009 or 2010. The Department indicates that base funding for recruit classes in these years was reallocated to salary, overtime, and other costs to absorb across-the-board funding reductions in the 2009-11 biennial budget. The bill would reestablish base funding for the costs associated with an annual recruit class.

4. The Department did not include funding for a recruit training class in its budget request. The Administration indicates that the funding for the recruit class was included after reevaluating the State Patrol's staffing needs in light of increasing vacancies.

5. The following table shows the average number of vacancies over the past 10 years among troopers and inspectors. The average number of vacancies reached a high point in 2011-12, but was reduced in 2012-13 with the graduation of 32 new troopers and inspectors. However, continued turnover has begun to increase vacancies. Based on the current attrition rate, it is expected that there will be approximately 35 to 40 vacancies by the end of the 2012-13 fiscal year. With a total of 489 trooper and inspector positions, 40 vacancies would be a vacancy rate of approximately 8%.

**Average Annual Vacancies Among Troopers and Inspectors**

<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Vacancies</u>
2003-04	30
2004-05	30
2005-06	43
2006-07	46
2007-08	21
2008-09	18
2009-10	19
2010-11	37
2011-12	56
2012-13*	31

\* Partial year.

6. The Department indicates that with the higher vacancy rates in recent years, the State Patrol has had to reduce highway patrols and weight enforcement. Whereas the State Patrol

has historically assigned at least one trooper to regular patrol in every county except Milwaukee (which receives freeway policing aids in lieu of trooper presence), there are currently no regular patrols in seven counties, and the State Patrol has increased the length of patrol sectors in many others. Longer patrol sectors result in longer response times in the case of incidents.

7. If the State Patrol did not conduct a recruit training class during the 2013-15 biennium, the Department estimates that the number of vacancies among troopers and inspectors would increase to about 105 by the end of the biennium, a vacancy rate exceeding 20%. It is likely, however, that this number of vacancies would lead to increasing overtime costs, as the patrols of the remaining troopers and inspectors are lengthened to compensate. In this event, the State Patrol may decide to reallocate funding from other functions and use accumulated salary savings associated with vacancies to conduct a recruit class. The Department indicates that this would likely involve further reductions in patrols and the class may be smaller. The effect, therefore, of providing separate funding for a recruit training class would be to allow the State Patrol to fill more vacancies and fill them sooner than may otherwise be the case and avoid reductions in traffic patrols and weight enforcement.

8. If the classes are the same size as the 2011 class, they would yield approximately 65 graduates over the biennium. With this number of graduates, there would be approximately 40 vacancies by the end of the 2013-15 biennium, or slightly above the current vacancy rate (although the number of vacancies would depend upon whether the Committee approves the creation of 20 new inspector positions, since some of the new recruits would fill those positions in 2013-14).

9. The Committee may determine that in light of the fiscal challenges facing the overall transportation budget, some decisions may need to be made to reduce funding for various programs. In this case, the Committee could decide to delete the funding provided for recruit class training, which would require the State Patrol to use vacancy savings or other base funding for training costs (Alternative 3). Alternatively, the Committee could provide funding in 2013-14, which would fund a recruit class in that year, but would provide no ongoing base funding or any funding for a class in 2014-15 (Alternative 2). In this case, the Legislature could reevaluate the need for recruit class funding in future biennia in light of ongoing transportation budget priorities.

10. If the funding provided by the bill is reduced or eliminated, the State Patrol may not conduct a recruit class in one or both years and may conduct smaller classes. If, as an example, the size of the graduating class is reduced by one-half, to approximately 15, then the number of vacancies would increase by the end of the biennium.

## **ALTERNATIVES**

1. Approve the Governor's recommendation to provide \$1,369,000 SEG annually for the costs of recruit training classes for new troopers and inspectors.

2. Modify the Governor's recommendation by deleting \$1,369,000 SEG in 2014-15 to eliminate recruit training funding in that year, which would require the Department to use vacancy savings or other resources to fund a recruit training course in that year if it is deemed necessary.

<b>ALT 2</b>	<b>Change to Bill</b>
	Funding
SEG	- \$1,369,000

3. Delete provision.

<b>ALT 3</b>	<b>Change to Bill</b>
	Funding
SEG	- \$2,738,000

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