



## Legislative Fiscal Bureau

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2017

Joint Committee on Finance

Paper #631

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

#### *Base Agency*

[LFB 2017-19 Budget Summary: Page 452, #3]

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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 307 officer positions classified as troopers and 92 that are classified as motor carrier inspectors. There are also 87 supervisory positions (including the ranks of sergeant, lieutenant, captain, major, and colonel), and the State Patrol superintendent. State Patrol trains its members exclusively through a residential training program, generally referred to as the Academy.

#### **GOVERNOR**

Decrease State Patrol funding by \$1,417,300 in 2018-19, which the administration indicates would be associated with the elimination of funding for one recruit class.

#### **DISCUSSION POINTS**

1. The Governor's budget recommendations would decrease State Patrol funding by \$1,417,300 in 2018-19 to eliminate funding for one recruit class of 40 cadets. If approved, this provision would also eliminate ongoing base funding for this purpose in subsequent fiscal years.
2. As was recommended by the Governor during the 2015-17 biennial deliberations, the prior biennial budget act, 2015 Act 55, provided \$1.2 million annually to fund two State Patrol recruitment classes of 35 cadets in 2015-17 and restored ongoing base funding for that purpose.
3. Recruit classes are the mechanism through which the State Patrol recruits, trains, and

tests cadets in order to fill vacant law enforcement positions within the Division. The entire recruitment and training process takes approximately nine months. State Patrol recruits are required to undergo an extensive, initial recruitment and testing process. Following this screening, successful applicants are then eligible to become cadets and participate in 23 weeks of residential training. The residential training component is completed at the State Patrol Academy, housed in a facility at Fort McCoy in Monroe County. This facility is also used for the ongoing training of troopers and inspectors, as well as for hosting trainings for other law enforcement officers and state personnel.

4. Historically, the State Patrol has generally conducted recruit classes on an annual basis to replace troopers and inspectors who retire or resign. More recently, however, there have been some years in which no class has been conducted due to the absence of available funding for this purpose. As the frequency of recruit classes has declined, recruit classes have generally increased in size in order to try and compensate for the increasing numbers of vacancies.

5. From 1991 through 2002, the State Patrol conducted 13 recruit classes in eleven years. These classes graduated 317 sworn officers with an average graduating class size of about 24. In the subsequent 13 years, from 2003 through 2016, only nine classes have been held. These classes graduated 283 officers, with an average graduating class size of about 31. In order to keep pace with the current rate of retirements and resignations (an average about 2.8 per month), the State Patrol would need to graduate an average class of 34 cadets per year (12 months \* 2.8 vacancies per month).

6. Over the past six years, (2011 through 2016), State Patrol has completed four recruit classes, graduating a total of 148 cadets (not including the current, ongoing class). The average, initial class size was 45 and the average number of graduates successfully placed in a posting was 37 (148 recruits / 4 classes). However, when averaged over the entire six-year period, the average, annual number of graduates is equal to about 25 (148 / 6 years), which is about nine less than the estimated 34 graduating cadets per year that would be needed to offset the current monthly vacancy rate.

7. State Patrol position data from March, 2017, indicates that the Division had a total of 57 vacancies, comprised of 41 vacant trooper positions, 11 vacant inspector positions, and five vacant sergeant positions (an overall vacancy rate of about 11.7%). Attachment 1 provides a recent summary of filled and vacant positions by rank. Relative to the 62<sup>nd</sup> recruit class, which is currently underway, 51 recruits began the training process and 41 are expected to graduate. Under the Governor's recommendation, the Department expects to train a 63<sup>rd</sup> recruit class in 2017-18, from September, 2017, through March, 2018, and anticipates a graduating class size of 40. However, beyond that recruitment class, no specific funding would be available for a subsequent recruit class after this date. Estimates of State Patrol vacancies under this recommendation (as well as alternatives described later in this paper) are provided in Attachment 2. As shown in that attachment, total vacancies under the Governor's recommendations would be expected to reach 122 by July, 2021.

8. State Patrol concentrates its enforcement efforts on the state's most important highways and where crash and fatality data suggest the need for law enforcement presence. On highway systems with larger traffic volumes, such as interstates and other backbone highways, the State

Patrol often assigns troopers to overlapping sectors. For instance, in a given area, three troopers could be assigned to three sectors of highway, each with overlapping coverage. In this example, if coverage of the three-sector area was reduced to two troopers, average incident response time and officer workload would likely increase. In less heavily trafficked areas, troopers may be assigned to all or part of a county and tend to focus enforcement efforts on the more important highways within their assigned areas. As the number of State Patrol vacancies increases, troopers would likely be required to work overtime to cover a larger number of sectors. However, to the extent that fatigue could become an issue as vacancy rates grow, the State Patrol could also decide to reduce or suspend coverage of certain sectors.

9. 2015 Act 201 requires executive branch agencies to submit two separate budget reduction proposals with their budget requests. The first proposal would be to maintain state operations appropriations at the base level for the two years of the next biennium and the second proposal would be a 5% reduction for each year. As a part of fulfilling this requirement in its 2017-19 agency request, the Department submitted an option to eliminate funding for 2018 State Patrol recruit class and hold vacancies open in 2018-19, as a state appropriations reduction option. DOT indicated that it would have carried out a 2019 recruitment class of 33 cadets using the base funding that would have remained available in 2018-19. Further, the Department's funding reduction option would have retained base funding for an annual recruitment class in the 2019-21 biennium and allowed DOT to fill some of the vacant positions in the next budget.

10. The Governor's recommendation to reduce State Patrol recruitment funding was cited in the Executive Budget Book as an item intended "to create additional operational efficiencies." It could be argued that the use of these funds for other DOT programming purposes, instead of for State Patrol recruitment, is one of many budgetary decisions intended to allow the administration to focus state resources on local and state highway preservation and maintenance, which would be consistent with the Governor's stated transportation budget priorities. [Alternative 1]

11. As shown in the following table, the numbers of alcohol-related traffic fatalities and crashes in the state have generally declined over the past ten years. However, the overall number of traffic crashes, which reached a low point during the period of recent economic recession, has increased by 11.8% since 2010. In addition, alcohol-related traffic fatalities remain a significant percentage of all traffic fatalities (between 30% and 40% since 2010).

## Wisconsin Traffic Fatality and Crash Data

Year	Traffic Fatalities			Traffic Crashes		
	Alcohol-Related	Total	% of Total	Alcohol-Related	Total	% of Total
2006	305	712	42.8%	8,393	117,877	7.1%
2007	337	737	45.7	8,327	125,123	6.7
2008	234	587	39.9	7,235	125,103	5.8
2009	238	542	43.9	6,429	109,991	5.8
2010	220	562	39.1	5,751	108,808	5.3
2011	225	565	39.8	5,297	112,516	4.7
2012	223	601	37.1	4,933	109,385	4.5
2013	185	527	35.1	4,954	118,254	4.2
2014	162	498	32.5	4,932	119,734	4.1
2015	190	555	34.2	5,174	121,615	4.3

12. State Patrol (along with other law enforcement agencies) plays a significant role in enforcing traffic laws on state highways, the violation of which frequently results in a significant portion of the traffic crashes and fatalities shown in the table above. As an example, in 2015, State Patrol officers issued 2,487 citations for drug and alcohol-related traffic offenses, 47,979 citations for speeding, 18,370 citations for seatbelt violations, inspected 31,483 commercial motor vehicles, and made a total of 213,624 traffic stops. As indicated by DOT, State Patrol is not only responsible for enforcing traffic and criminal laws and inspecting trucks, but also for helping motorists in need, inspecting school buses, and ambulances, and assisting local law enforcement agencies with natural disasters or civil disturbances. These are significant public safety functions that would be performed at reduced levels in the future given the large number of State Patrol vacancies that are expected to occur if 2018-19 (and ongoing base) recruit class funding is eliminated. In the absence of additional, future recruitment funding, the Governor's budget recommendation would result in an estimated State Patrol vacancy rate of 25.1% by July, 2021.

13. In light of these concerns, the Committee could instead decide to do either of the following: (a) restore the \$1.4 million in recruit class funding in 2018-19 (and ongoing base funding) and instead reduce recruitment funding by the same amount in 2017-18, which would be more in line with the manner in which the Department identified the potential reduction [Alternative 2]; or (b) delete the Governor's recommendation which would retain the current law funding level for State Patrol recruitment purposes (\$1.4 million annually) in the 2017-19 biennium. [Alternative 3] Estimated future State Patrol vacancies under Alternatives 2 and 3 are shown in the Attachment 2.

### ALTERNATIVES

1. Approve the Governor's recommendations to delete \$1,417,300 in 2018-19 from the State Patrol, which the administration indicates would be associated with elimination of funding for

one recruit class. This would also delete ongoing base year funding for this purpose in subsequent fiscal years.

<b>ALT 1</b>	<b>Change to</b>	
	<b>Base</b>	<b>Bill</b>
SEG	- \$1,417,300	\$0

2. Modify the Governor's recommendation for the State Patrol recruit class funding as follows: (a) delete \$1,417,300 in 2017-18; and (b) provide \$1,417,300 in 2018-19. This modification would delete recruit class funding in the first year of the biennium and would restore recruitment funding in the second year, as well as ongoing base funding for this purpose.

<b>ALT 2</b>	<b>Change to</b>	
	<b>Base</b>	<b>Bill</b>
SEG	- \$1,417,300	\$0

3. Delete the provision. This would restore \$1,417,300 in 2018-19 for the State Patrol recruit class in that year and would provide ongoing base funding for recruit classes in subsequent fiscal years. Funding would be provided for recruit classes in both 2018 and 2019.

<b>ALT 3</b>	<b>Change to</b>	
	<b>Base</b>	<b>Bill</b>
SEG	\$0	\$1,417,300

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Attachments



## ATTACHMENT 1

### State Patrol Positions and Vacancies by Rank\*

<u>Positions by Rank</u>	<u>Filled</u>	<u>Vacant</u>	<u>Total</u>
<b>Non-Supervisory Positions</b>			
Trooper	266	41	307
Inspector	<u>81</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>92</u>
Subtotal	347	52	399
<b>Supervisory Positions</b>			
Sergeant	56	5	61
Lieutenant	14	0	14
Captain	8	0	8
Major	2	0	2
Lieutenant Colonel	1	0	1
Colonel	1	0	1
Superintendent	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>
Subtotal	83	5	88
Total	430	57	487

\*Data from March, 2017.

## ATTACHMENT 2

### Estimated State Patrol Officer Vacancies by Year Under Various Funding Scenarios

<u>Date</u>	<u>Alternative 1 (Governor)</u>	<u>Alternative 2</u>	<u>Alternative 3</u>
July 1, 2017	30	30	30
July 1, 2018	24	64	24
July 1, 2019	57	57	17
July 1, 2020	91	48	8*
July 1, 2021	122	42	2*

\*Under the current set of technical budget instructions, agencies must take a reduction of 3% on adjusted base permanent salaries for all alpha appropriations funding more than 50.0 FTE permanent (classified and unclassified) positions. This instruction currently applies to State Patrol and requires a vacancy rate of 14.64 FTE. DOT could adjust its recruitment schedule or class sizes as needed to accommodate this requirement in future fiscal years.

Note: The vacancy estimates associated with these alternatives assume that the total number of graduating cadets from future State Patrol recruit classes would be equal to 40 per class in 2017-19 and beyond.

*Alternative 1.* Approve the Governor's recommendations to delete \$1.4 million in 2018-19 from the State Patrol, which the administration indicates would be associated with elimination of funding for one recruit class. This would also delete ongoing base year funding for this purpose in subsequent fiscal years.

*Alternative 2.* Modify the Governor's recommendation for the State Patrol recruit class funding as follows: (a) delete \$1.4 million in 2017-18; and (b) provide \$1.4 million in 2018-19. This modification would delete recruit class funding only in the first year of the biennium and would restore recruitment funding in the second year, as well as ongoing base funding for this purpose.

*Alternative 3.* Delete the provision. Restore \$1.4 million in 2018-19 for the State Patrol recruit class in that year and to provide ongoing base funding for recruit classes in subsequent fiscal years.