



## Legislative Fiscal Bureau

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Joint Committee on Finance

Paper #239

### **Correctional Officer Pre-Service Training Standards Board (Corrections -- Adult Corrections)**

[LFB 2015-17 Budget Summary: Page 124, #10]

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#### **CURRENT LAW**

Under current law, no person may be permanently employed as a correctional officer unless the person has passed a pre-service training program approved by the Department.

#### **GOVERNOR**

Create a correctional officer pre-service training standards board attached to the Department of Corrections. The board would include eight members: (a) the Secretary of the Department of Corrections, or his or her designee; (b) the Corrections training director; (c) the Corrections security chief, or his or her designee; (d) one Division of Community Corrections employee; (e) one Division of Juvenile Corrections employee; (f) one representative from the Department of Health Services; (g) one representative of the Wisconsin Technical College System; and (h) one public member who resides in Wisconsin and who is not employed with Corrections or in law enforcement. The non-ex officio members would be appointed by the Governor. Specify that the public member must be appointed for staggered four-year terms, and no member can serve beyond the time when the member ceases to hold the office, employment, or status for board eligibility.

Specify that no person may be permanently employed as a correctional officer unless the person has passed a pre-service training program approved by the pre-service training standards board. Require the board to establish a process to certify persons as having met the professional standards that qualify them to be correctional officers.

## DISCUSSION POINTS

1. Under current law, no person may be permanently employed as a correctional officer unless the person has passed a pre-service training program approved by the Department. To be eligible to be a correctional officer, an individual must: (a) be 18 years of age; (b) have a valid driver's license and be eligible to drive a fleet vehicle (minimum two years driving experience, no OWI convictions for the past 12 months, and fewer than three moving violations in the past two years); and (c) be eligible to possess a firearm.

2. Individuals who meet the above mandatory requirements then must pass a multiple choice examination, be interviewed, then undergo fitness testing. In addition, the Department conducts a criminal background search and checks the individual's references. Pending a medical and drug test, candidates are extended a conditional offer of employment.

3. Candidates then participate in the Department's seven-week pre-service academy, which includes classroom instruction, practical activities, and on-the-job training. According to Corrections, candidates must receive a score of at least 70% on weekly examinations, the final exam, and in the following activities: firearms training, incapacitating agents, principles of subject control, and CPR/AED and first aid. Over 400 individuals graduated from the training program each year for the past two years.

4. Under the bill, instead of the Department, no person may be permanently employed as a correctional officer unless the person has passed a pre-service training program approved by a pre-service training standards board. In addition, the pre-service training standards board would be required to establish a process to certify persons as having met the professional standards that qualify them as correctional officers.

5. Board members would include eight members: (a) the Secretary of Corrections, or his or her designee; (b) the Corrections training director; (c) the Corrections security chief, or his or her designee; (d) one Division of Community Corrections employee; (e) one Division of Juvenile Corrections employee; (f) one representative from the Department of Health Services; (g) one representative of the Wisconsin Technical College System; and (h) one public member who resides in Wisconsin and who is not employed with Corrections or in law enforcement.

6. Creation of the pre-service training standards board was not requested by the Department. According to the Department of Administration, the new board "would assist the Department in setting standards that providers (outside of DOC) would utilize in setting accepted training programs; however the Department would still appoint correctional officers." [Alternative 1] No other justification for creation of this additional board has been provided.

7. It may be argued that the Department's current process for training correctional officers is sufficient and the bill provision is unneeded. Further, if the Governor or Secretary wish to create such an executive branch organization, such an advisory body could be created without legislative involvement. As such, the Committee could delete the provision. [Alternative 2]

## **ALTERNATIVES**

1. Approve the Governor's recommendation to create a correctional officer pre-service training standards board attached to the Department of Corrections.

Specify that no person may be permanently employed as a correctional officer unless the person has passed a pre-service training program approved by the pre-service training standards board. Require the board to establish a process to certify persons as having met the professional standards that qualify them to be correctional officers.

2. Delete provision.

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