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SENATE BILL NO. 1479

Offered January 17, 2025

A *BILL to amend and reenact § 15.2-1706 of the Code of Virginia, relating to certification of law-enforcement officers; out-of-state certifications recognized; requirements.*

Patron—Suetterlein

Referred to Committee for Courts of Justice

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That § 15.2-1706 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 15.2-1706. Certification through training required for all law-enforcement officers; waiver of requirements; out-of-state certifications recognized.

A. All law-enforcement officers as defined in § 9.1-101 and all jail officers as defined in § 53.1-1 must be certified through the successful completion of training at an approved criminal justice training academy in order to remain eligible for appointment or employment. In order to obtain such certification, all entry level law-enforcement officers seeking certification on or after July 1, 2003, shall successfully complete statewide certification examinations developed and administered by the Department of Criminal Justice Services (*the Department*). The Department may delegate administration of the examinations to an approved criminal justice training academy and may revoke such delegation at its discretion. The appointee's or employee's hiring agency must provide the Department of Criminal Justice Services with verification that law-enforcement or jail officers first hired after July 1, 1994, have met the minimum standards set forth in § 15.2-1705.

B. The requirement for the successful completion of the law-enforcement certification examination may be waived by the Department of Criminal Justice Services based upon previous law-enforcement experience and training. To be eligible for such waiver, the individual must have applied for and been granted an exemption or partial exemption in accordance with § 9.1-116.

C. *The Department shall, upon application by an individual for employment as a law-enforcement officer, recognize law-enforcement certification issued by another state as fulfillment of the qualifications required by the Department for certification as a law-enforcement officer in the Commonwealth if the following conditions are met:*

1. Such individual holds a current and valid law-enforcement officer certification in another state with a similar scope of practice, as determined by the Department;

2. Such individual has held certification in such other state for at least three years;

3. The certifying body of such other state required such individual to pass an examination and meet certain standards related to education, training, or experience;

4. There are no pending investigations or unresolved complaints against such individual and the certifying body in such other state holds such individual in good standing;

5. Such individual completes the number of hours of qualified field training as required by the Department; and

6. Such individual meets the requirements for certification and employment in accordance with § 15.2-1705.

D. *For the purposes of this section, "law-enforcement officer" means the same as that term is defined in § 9.1-101.*

INTRODUCED

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