
THIRD READING

Bill No: AB 992
Author: Irwin (D)
Amended: 8/29/25 in Senate
Vote: 21

SENATE PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE: 6-0, 6/24/25
AYES: Arreguín, Seyarto, Caballero, Gonzalez, Pérez, Wiener

SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE: 7-0, 8/29/25
AYES: Caballero, Seyarto, Cabaldon, Dahle, Grayson, Richardson, Wahab

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 69-0, 5/15/25 (Consent) - See last page for vote

SUBJECT: Peace officers

SOURCE: California Police Chiefs Association

DIGEST: This bill, commencing January 1, 2031, requires a peace officer to obtain either an associate's degree, bachelor's degree, modern policing degree, professional policing certificate, or otherwise have specified military or out-of-state law enforcement experience, within 36 months of receiving their basic certificate from the Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST), as specified.

ANALYSIS:

Existing law:

- 1) Establishes POST to set minimum standards for the recruitment and training of peace officers, develop training courses and curriculum, and establish a professional certificate program that awards different levels of certification based on training, education, experience, and other relevant prerequisites. (Penal Code (Pen. Code), §§ 830-832.10; 13500 et seq.)

- 2) Establishes the powers of POST, including among others, to develop and implement programs to increase the effectiveness of law enforcement, to secure the cooperation of state-level peace officers, agencies, and bodies having jurisdiction over systems of public higher education in continuing the development of college-level training and education programs. (Pen. Code, §§ 830-832.10; 13500 et seq.)
- 3) Requires every peace officer in the state to satisfactorily complete an introductory training course prescribed by POST. (Pen. Code, § 832, subd. (a).)
- 4) Provides that each class of public officers or employees declared by law to be peace officers shall meet specified minimum standards, including that they be a high school graduate, pass the General Education Development Test or other high school equivalency test, or have attained a two-year, four-year, or advanced degree from an accredited college or university, as specified. (Gov. Code, § 1031.)
- 5) Specifies that it shall not be construed to preclude the adoption of additional or higher standards. (Gov. Code, § 1031, subd. (g).)
- 6) Requires any person designated as a peace officer, notwithstanding designated exceptions, or any peace officer employed by an agency that participates in a POST program must be at least 21 years of age at the time of appointment. (Gov. Code, § 1031.4, subd. (a).)
- 7) Provides that any person, who as of December 31, 2021, is currently enrolled in a basic academy or is employed as a peace officer by a public entity in California is not subject to the age requirement of 21 years of age. (Gov. Code, § 1031.4, subd. (b).)
- 8) Requires representatives from POST, stakeholders from law enforcement, the California State University, and community organizations to serve as advisors to the Office of the Chancellor of the Community Colleges to develop a modern policing degree program. (Pen. Code, § 13511.1, subd. (a).)
- 9) Requires the Office of the Chancellor of the California Community Colleges (hereinafter, "OCC") to report recommendations to the Legislature outlining a plan to implement the modern policing degree program on, or by, June 1, 2023, and requires the recommendations to include certain elements. (Pen. Code, § 13511.1, subd. (a).)

- 10) Requires POST to approve and adopt the education criteria for peace officers within two years from the submission of the report to the Legislature. (Pen. Code, § 13511.1, subd. (c).)
- 11) Requires POST to adopt rules establishing minimum standards relating to the recruitment, training and fitness of state and local law enforcement officers. (Pen. Code, §§ 13510 & 13510.5.)

This bill:

- 1) Provides that commencing January 1, 2031, each state officer and employee designated as a peace officer, as specified, or any other peace officer employed by an agency that participates in the POST program shall attain one or more of the following degrees, experience or certificates within 36 months of receiving the basic certificate by POST:
 - a) An associate's degree from a community college that is accredited by an agency recognized by the United States Department of Education.
 - b) A bachelor's degree or other advanced degree from a college or university that is accredited by an agency recognized by the United States Department of Education.
 - c) A modern policing degree.
 - d) A professional policing certificate.
- 2) Specifies that the education requirement above does not apply to the following:
 - a) An individual with at least four years of law enforcement experience from another state with separation in good standing.
 - b) An individual with at least four years of military service in the Armed Forces of the United States with an honorable discharge if military service has concluded.
- 3) Specifies that a modern policing degree shall meet all of the following criteria:
 - a) Require at least 60 semester units or 90 quarter units of degree-applicable credit coursework from a college or university that is accredited by an agency recognized by the United States Department of Education.
 - b) Award credits for required commission-certified academy course instruction.

- c) Offer courses that include, but are not limited to, the following list of subjects:
 - i. Communications
 - ii. Psychology
 - iii. Writing
 - iv. Ethics
 - v. Criminal Justice
- 4) Specifies that a professional policing certificate may be offered by any accredited college or university, and shall meet the following criteria:
 - a) Require at least 16 semester units or 24 quarter units of degree-applicable credit coursework from a college or university that is accredited by an agency recognized by the United States Department of Education.
 - b) Offer courses that include, but are not limited to, the following list of subjects:
 - i. Communications
 - ii. Psychology
 - iii. Writing
 - iv. Ethics
 - v. Criminal Justice
- 5) Provides that coursework completed as part of the POST-certified academy shall count toward the modern policing degree and professional policing certificate and may count toward any associate's degree or bachelor's degree obtained to comply with this bill.
- 6) Provides that coursework completed as part of military or law enforcement training that is within the curriculum of a modern policing degree or a professional policing certificate by an individual during prior employment in the military or in law enforcement in another state may count toward a modern policing degree or policing certificate.

- 7) Provides that coursework completed as part of the commission-certified academy shall not solely satisfy the unit requirement for a professional policing certificate.
- 8) Provides that the educational requirement therein does not apply to any person who is employed by the Department of State Hospitals or to any person who, as of December 31, 2030, is currently enrolled in a basic academy or is employed as a peace officer by a public entity in California.
- 9) Deletes the provision of existing law requiring POST to approve and adopt education criteria for peace officers based on the report submitted to the Legislature by the OCC within 2 years of that submission.

Comments

Existing law sets forth several requirements that must be met by individuals seeking to become peace officers in California. With regard to criminal record, no person can become a peace officer who has been convicted of a felony, who has been charged with a felony and judged incompetent, who has been found not guilty by reason of insanity, or who has been adjudged addicted or in danger of becoming addicted to narcotics. Additionally, every prospective peace officer must meet all of the following minimum standards: be legally authorized to work in the United States under federal law, be 18 years of age or older, be fingerprinted for purposes of disclosing a criminal record, be of good moral character, as determined by background investigation, and be found to be free from any physical, emotional, or mental condition, including bias against race or ethnicity, gender, nationality, religion, disability, or sexual orientation, that might adversely affect the exercise of the powers of a peace officer.

In terms of education, it is worth noting that academic requirements for peace officers vary by jurisdiction and on the type and level of peace officer position. In California, prospective officers are required to have no more than a high school diploma or GED and must complete a certain number of training hours through POST to earn a basic certificate. However, California law enforcement officers are already much more likely to have some college education or an associate degree compared to full-time workers in other occupations, and California has more college-educated officers than all but three states. Though with recent increases in, and public focus on, incidents of excessive force by peace officers, there have been growing efforts to establish higher baseline educational requirements for officers. Studies have shown that officers with education beyond a GED or high school diploma use force less often, use lower levels of force, and receive fewer complaints and disciplinary actions than their non-college educated counterparts.

This bill is the latest legislative effort to establish and clarify minimum educational standards for peace officers. This bill outlines six potential ways for prospective California peace officer to comply with the minimum educational standards recommended in the OCC report, which would be required in addition to the high school diploma/GED requirement in existing law. Specifically, this bill would require, commencing January 1, 2031, a prospective officer to attain one or more of the following degrees, experience or certificates within 36 months of receiving their basic certificate from POST: 1) an associate's degree from a community college; 2) a bachelor's degree or other advanced degree from an accredited college or university; 3) a modern policing degree, as specified; 4) a "professional policing certificate," as specified; or 5) have at least four years of military or out of state law enforcement experience, subject to an honorable discharge (if military service is concluded) or separation in good standing, respectively.

This bill specifies that a modern policing degree must require at least 60 semester units or 90 quarter units of degree-applicable credit coursework, and that a professional policing certificate must require at least 16 semester units or 24 quarter units of degree-applicable credit coursework. Both the modern policing degree and professional policing certificate must offer courses on specified topics, including, but not limited to communications, psychology, writing, ethics and criminal justice. This bill further states that coursework completed as part of the commission certified academy counts toward the modern policing degree and policing certificate, and may count toward any associate's degree or bachelor's degree. Relevant coursework completed as part of military training or as part of prior employment as a police officer in a different state also may count toward the modern policing degree and policing certificate.

FISCAL EFFECT: Appropriation: No Fiscal Com.: Yes Local: No

According to the Senate Appropriations Committee:

- Unknown, potentially significant costs (General Fund, local funds) to state and local law enforcement agencies to update hiring policies relating to the minimum qualification for peace officers, and to expand pay or benefits relating to additional educational requirements. Local costs to comply with this measure may be subject to reimbursement by the state if the Commission on State Mandates determines that this bill imposes a state-mandated local program.
- Unknown, potentially significant costs (Proposition 98, General Fund) to the extent that the bill results in an additional students enrolled in community colleges each year. Colleges are also likely to incur unknown potential costs to

offer modern policing degree programs, including hiring faculty and curriculum development.

SUPPORT: (Verified 8/29/25)

California Police Chiefs Association (source)
Arcadia Police Officers' Association
Bay Area Council
Brea Police Association
Burbank Police Officers' Association
California Association of Highway Patrolmen
California Association of School Police Chiefs
California Coalition of School Safety Professionals
California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office
California Narcotic Officers' Association
California Reserve Peace Officers Association
California State Sheriffs Association
Claremont Police Officers Association
Corona Police Officers Association
County of Los Angeles Board of Supervisors
Culver City Police Officers' Association
Fullerton Police Officers' Association
League of California Cities
Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department
Los Angeles School Police Management Association
Los Angeles School Police Officers Association
Murrieta Police Officers' Association
Newport Beach Police Association;
Palos Verdes Police Officers Association
Peace Officers Research Association of California
Placer County Deputy Sheriffs' Association
Pomona Police Officers' Association
Riverside Police Officers Association
Riverside Sheriffs' Association

OPPOSITION: (Verified 8/29/25)

None received

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 69-0, 5/15/25

AYES: Addis, Aguiar-Curry, Ahrens, Alvarez, Ávila Farías, Bains, Bauer-Kahan, Berman, Boerner, Bonta, Bryan, Calderon, Carrillo, Chen, Connolly, Davies, DeMaio, Dixon, Elhawary, Ellis, Flora, Fong, Gabriel, Gallagher, Garcia, Gipson, Mark González, Hadwick, Haney, Harabedian, Hoover, Irwin, Jackson, Kalra, Krell, Lackey, Lee, Lowenthal, Macedo, McKinnor, Muratsuchi, Nguyen, Ortega, Pacheco, Papan, Patel, Patterson, Pellerin, Petrie-Norris, Ransom, Celeste Rodriguez, Michelle Rodriguez, Rogers, Blanca Rubio, Sanchez, Schiavo, Schultz, Sharp-Collins, Solache, Soria, Ta, Tangipa, Valencia, Wallis, Ward, Wicks, Wilson, Zbur, Rivas

NO VOTE RECORDED: Alanis, Arambula, Bennett, Caloza, Castillo, Jeff Gonzalez, Hart, Quirk-Silva, Ramos, Stefani

Prepared by: Alex Barnett / PUB. S. /
9/2/25 18:08:47

**** END ****