



HOUSE BILL 436: Support Law Enforcement Mental Health.

2021-2022 General Assembly

Committee:		Date:	February 28, 2022
Introduced by:		Prepared by:	Jennifer H. Bedford
Analysis of:	S.L. 2021-136		Staff Attorney

OVERVIEW: *S.L. 2021-136 requires psychological screening examinations for law enforcement officers prior to employment; educates officers on maintaining good mental health; makes officers statewide aware of mental health resources; and creates a study on the benefits of physical fitness testing to officers.*

This act has various effective dates. Please see the full summary for more details.

***H436 is similar to Part VII of Senate Bill 300.**

CURRENT LAW: Chapters 17C and 17E of the General Statutes respectively, regulate the North Carolina Criminal Justice Education and Training Standards Commission and the North Carolina Sheriffs' Education and Training Standards Commission. The Commissions are responsible for establishing the requirements for the education and training of law enforcement officers throughout the State.

BILL ANALYSIS: S.L. 2021-136 does the following:

- Requires initial and in-service training on effective mental health and wellness strategies for law enforcement.
- Requires an in-person psychological screening examination, if practicable, by a licensed clinical psychologist before employment as a law enforcement officer or criminal justice officer to determine suitability to properly fulfill the responsibilities of the office.
- If an in-person examination is not practicable, a virtual examination is permitted.
- Encourages the Commissions to provide training by mental health professionals through in-person instruction.
- Directs all agencies employing certified criminal justice and justice officers, to coordinate with the appropriate local management entity/managed care organization or prepaid health plan to make information about State and local mental health resources easily available to all employees.
- Create a study to determine any benefits of ongoing physical fitness training on officers.

EFFECTIVE DATE: The codified changes to Chapters 17C and 17E became effective January 1, 2022, and apply to applications for law enforcement certification filed on or after that date. The remainder of this act became effective September 2, 2021.

BACKGROUND: The House Select Committee on Community Relations, Law Enforcement and Justice met 5 times during the 2019 Regular Session and made many recommendations. One recommendation was to provide law enforcement additional training and resources for encountering mental health issues related to the task of policing.

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