

Commission on Local Government

Estimate of Local Fiscal Impact

2015 General Assembly Session

Bill: SB974

Patron: Ruff

Date: 1/26/2015

In accordance with the provisions of §30-19.03 of the Code of Virginia, the staff of the Commission on Local Government offers the following analysis of the above-referenced legislation:

Bill Summary:

Requires a locality to reimburse the Department of State Police for training costs if the locality hires an officer of the Department of State Police within five years of the officer's completion of basic training at a police school operated and funded by the Department of State Police. The amount of the reimbursement will be reduced by one-fifth for each year that the officer worked for the Department of State Police.

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**Executive Summary:**

SB 974 requires a locality that hires an officer of the State Police to reimburse the Department of State Police for training costs if that officer is hired within five years of the completion of basic training at police school. The reimbursement would be prorated based upon the time the officer spent with the State Police after completion of basic training.

The affects of SB 974 are difficult for local governments to estimate. Impact will not be felt unless a locality was to hire an officer from the Department of State Police. Impacts are unlikely to be experienced at regular intervals.

A common question from responding localities was whether the State Police would also reimburse local governments if they were to hire a local deputy. Others noted that the onus of repayment should fall to the officer.

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**Local Analysis:**

**Locality:** City of Chesapeake

It is unclear how much the state spends training police officers. In Chesapeake, the estimate to train a local officer is \$60,000 per officer and we expect the cost at the state level may be greater; perhaps \$75,000. If that is the case, the City would lose up to \$75,000 every time it hired a state police officer. We might save some of the local cost of training the state police officer, but the candidate would still require training of Chesapeake policies and practices. Savings the City would realize from a shorter local training period by hiring a state police officer can not be determined.

Since the City has not hired any state police officers in recent history, we believe the impact of SB 974 is minimal for Chesapeake. However, on several occasions the State Police Department has hired personnel that the City has spent time and money to train. In that case the state benefits from the \$60,000 the City spends training an officer that then joins the State Police Department. If the Assembly believes localities are unfairly taking advantage of state police training when they hire a state police officer, then the Assembly should also address the local fiscal impact when the State Police Department hires a locally-trained officer.

If localities must reimburse the state when it hires a state police officer, the state should then reimburse localities when it hires a locally trained officer. Alternatively, perhaps we should recognize that the training of police officers is a cost of doing business and employees may later choose to leave for a variety of reasons. Chesapeake certainly has not hired state police officers in order to save on training costs.

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Locality: City of Danville

The City's Police Department feels this would be a minimal impact. Should the locality be required to reimburse the State Police, it may impact the hiring of the replacement officer.

Should the State Police hire a local officer, would the locality be reimbursed for the training?

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**Locality:** City of Lexington (2)

In the last 15 years, the City has not hired any State Police.

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Locality: City of Lynchburg

Estimated Fiscal Impact: \$29,239.00

The cost for the City to put a new recruit through the academy is \$25,815 and the cost of training for a State Trooper is \$55,054 so the difference in the two is the fiscal impact for the first year and would be reduced by one fifth each year.

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**Locality:** City of Roanoke

We have been advised that SB 974 will not proceed so a response was not developed.

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Locality: City of Virginia Beach

The delegate who sponsored this bill has since withdrawn it.

Locality: City of Winchester

No fiscal impact to the City of Winchester.

Locality: Henrico County

Estimated Fiscal Impact: \$12,000.00

The estimated fiscal impact is based on the training cost per officer in an academy for Henrico.

Locality: Henry County

The County does not anticipate an impact. According to Henry County Sheriff's office, this situation would rarely occur. According to the County Sheriff, it is more likely that the State Police would hire a County deputy in which the County has spent substantial money for training.

Locality: Prince George County

Estimated Fiscal Impact: \$5,000.00

The County hasn't typically hired from the Department of State Police. If it did, the cost estimate would be about \$5,000. This bill is concerning, but would not have much impact.

Locality: Rappahannock County

Estimated Fiscal Impact: \$3,000.00

Rappahannock County has never hired anyone away from State Police, though they have hired more than a few away from the County after it paid for their academy time without reimbursement. If it had, several years into their employment, \$3,000 should cover the last year.

Locality: Richmond County

Estimated Fiscal Impact: \$10,000.00

The County is opposed to SB 974. Does the State also want to reimburse the locality when a trained deputy goes to work for the State Police force? The state should do what localities do and come up with a contract with all recently trained state police that stipulates how long they need to be employed by the VSP until they are free to leave without having to pay back the training costs. Richmond County does this with both Sheriff's and EMS when it pays for their training costs.

It is hard to estimate the cost of this bill without knowing what it costs the state to train a state trooper.

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**Locality:** Rockingham County

No fiscal impact is expected. Rockingham County has not historically hired former State Police officers. Will the Commonwealth reimburse localities for training for those officers hired by the State, including universities or for those with Fire and Rescue training? This is a more frequent occurrence.

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Locality: Spotsylvania County

Spotsylvania has not hired former State Police officers in recent years. This legislation, if approved, will impact hiring decisions in the future as the County will need to take into consideration any training costs that would be paid to the State if a State Police employee were being considered for hire by Spotsylvania.

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**Locality:** Town of Buchanan **Estimated Fiscal Impact:** \$100.00

Law enforcement for the Town is contracted through the Botetourt County Sheriff's Office. The Town's contracted amount may go up to recover additional costs incurred by the County.

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Locality: Town of Front Royal **Estimated Fiscal Impact:** \$7,500.00

Costs should be borne by the employee should they elect to leave in the time following the training provided by the State. This legislation may limit an Officer's ability to obtain employment at a locality.

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**Locality:** Town of Rocky Mount (2) **Estimated Fiscal Impact:** \$4,000.00

This is the training academy cost per pupil. That aside, the Town enters to agreements with new hires that require them to pay the training costs if they leave within three years (prorated). The Commonwealth should pursue a similar strategy.

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