

H.585

An act relating to a study of law enforcement structure in the State

It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

Sec. 1. LEGISLATIVE STUDY; LAW ENFORCEMENT STRUCTURE IN
THE STATE

(a) Creation. There is created a Legislative Law Enforcement Study Committee to review various issues related to the structure of law enforcement in the State.

(b) Membership. The Committee shall be composed of the following eight members:

(1) Four current members of the House of Representatives, not all from the same political party, who shall be appointed by the Speaker of the House. Two of these members shall be from the Committee on Government Operations and two of whom shall be from the Committee on Judiciary.

(2) Four current members of the Senate, not all from the same political party, who shall be appointed by the Committee on Committees. Two of these members shall be from the Committee on Government Operations and two of whom shall be from the Committee on Judiciary.

(c) Powers and duties. The Committee shall study the structure of law enforcement in the State, including the following issues:

(1) the overall mission of the State Police;

(2) the overall missions of all other law enforcement entities in the State;

(3) the manner in which the State can be provided with the best law enforcement coverage statewide during all hours of every day and with improved law enforcement response times, including whether:

(A) the State Police should be right-sized based on a data-driven needs assessment and more effective deployment;

(B) State Police contracts with municipalities improve statewide law enforcement coverage;

(C) certain municipalities should be required to establish municipal police departments or to expand their municipal police department coverage to include additional towns;

(D) the State should be separated into regions with the requirement that there be regional policing within each region and if so, by which law enforcement entities; and

(E) the State should be separated into regions for the purpose of dispatch services;

(4) the manner in which special teams within the State Police can perform at the highest level;

(5) the retention of law enforcement officers prior to the age of retirement;

(6) whether there should be created an Agency of Public Safety and if so, which types of law enforcement officers should be under the jurisdiction of that Agency;

(7) whether the State's capability to perform in-state blood testing in criminal matters should be enhanced in order to avoid using out-of-state blood testing services;

(8) the role of the Vermont Criminal Justice Training Council and the Vermont Police Academy;

(9) whether to allow full-time deputy sheriffs employed by a county that has opted in to the Vermont State Employees Retirement System under 24 V.S.A. § 290(a) to be considered an "employee" of that System under 3 V.S.A. § 455;

(10) whether there should be created within the State Police the position of Cold Case Investigator; and

(11) any other issues identified in the latest Law Enforcement Advisory Board report.

(d) Assistance. The Committee shall have the administrative, technical, and legal assistance of the Office of Legislative Council and the Joint Fiscal Office.

(e) Report. On or before December 31, 2014, the Committee shall submit a written report to the General Assembly with its findings and any

recommendations for legislative action. Any recommendation for legislative action shall be accompanied by the cost to the State and to any affected municipalities that would be necessary to support the recommendation.

(f) Meetings.

(1) The Speaker of the House and the President Pro Tempore of the Senate shall call the first meeting of the Committee to occur on or before July 30, 2014.

(2) The Committee shall select two co-chairs from among its members at the first meeting, one of whom shall be a member of the House and one of whom shall be a member of the Senate.

(3)(A) A majority of the members of the Committee shall be physically present at the same location to constitute a quorum.

(B) A member may vote only if physically present at the meeting location.

(C) Action shall be taken only if there is both a quorum and a majority vote of the members physically present and voting.

(4) The Committee shall cease to exist on December 31, 2014.

(g) Reimbursement. For attendance at meetings during adjournment of the General Assembly, legislative members of the Committee shall be entitled to per diem compensation and reimbursement of expenses pursuant to 2 V.S.A. § 406 for no more than five meetings, unless prior approval for

additional meetings is given by the Speaker of the House and the President Pro

Tempore of the Senate.

Sec. 2. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on passage.