

S.192

An act relating to transferring the professional regulation of law enforcement officers from the Vermont Criminal Justice Training Council to the Office of Professional Regulation.

The House proposes to the Senate to amend the bill by striking all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

Sec. 1. 20 V.S.A. § 2405 is amended to read:

§ 2405. COUNCIL HEARING AND SANCTION PROCEDURE

(a) Generally. Except as otherwise provided in this subchapter, ~~the Council~~ all proceedings under this subchapter shall conduct its proceedings be conducted in accordance with the Vermont Administrative Procedure Act. This includes the ability to summarily suspend the certification of a law enforcement officer in accordance with 3 V.S.A. § 814(c).

(b) Prosecutor.

(1) An Assistant Attorney General assigned by the Office of the Attorney General shall be responsible for prosecuting unprofessional conduct cases under this subchapter.

(2) The burden of proof shall be on the State to show by a preponderance of the evidence that a law enforcement officer has engaged in unprofessional conduct.

(c) Hearing officer.

(1) The Council shall appoint a hearing officer, who shall be an attorney admitted to practice law in this State, to conduct any unprofessional conduct

hearing under this subchapter. The Council shall choose the hearing officer from a list of hearing officers provided by the Office of Professional Regulation.

(2) The hearing officer may administer oaths and exercise powers properly incidental to the conduct of the hearing.

(3) Any hearing officer sitting in an unprofessional conduct case shall do so impartially and without any ex parte knowledge of the case in controversy.

(4)(A) The hearing officer shall issue findings of fact and conclusions of law regarding the prosecutor's charges of unprofessional conduct.

(B) For the purposes of subdivision 2406(b)(1)(B) of this subchapter, the hearing officer shall determine at the hearing and shall include in his or her findings of fact whether there is a pending labor proceeding related to any unprofessional conduct that the hearing officer concludes a law enforcement officer committed.

(5)(A) The hearing officer shall report the findings of fact and conclusions of law to the Council within 30 days after the conclusion of the hearing, unless the Council grants an extension. The provisions of 3 V.S.A. § 811 regarding proposals for decision shall not apply to the hearing officer's report.

(B) The hearing officer's findings and conclusions shall be binding on the Council; provided, however, that the Council may request that the hearing officer make clarifications or additional findings.

(d) Council.

(1) The Council shall hold a sanction hearing based on the hearing officer's findings of fact and conclusions of law. Unless the Council grants an extension, the Council shall hold its sanction hearing within 30 days after the date the hearing officer reports his or her findings of fact and conclusions of law to the Council or within 30 days after the date the hearing officer makes clarifications or additional findings under subdivision (c)(5)(B) of this section, whichever occurs later.

(2) Unless the Council grants an extension, the Council shall issue its sanction order within 10 days after its sanction hearing.

Sec. 2. 20 V.S.A. § 2406 is amended to read:

§ 2406. PERMITTED COUNCIL SANCTIONS

(a) Generally. The Council may impose any of the following sanctions on a law enforcement officer's certification upon ~~its finding~~ a hearing officer's conclusion that a law enforcement officer committed unprofessional conduct:

(1) written warning;

(2) suspension, but to run concurrently with the length and time of any suspension imposed by a law enforcement agency with an effective internal affairs program, which shall amount to suspension for time already served if an

officer has already served a suspension imposed by his or her agency with such a program;

(3) revocation, with the option of recertification at the discretion of the Council; or

(4) permanent revocation.

(b) Intended revocation; temporary voluntary surrender.

(1)(A) If, after ~~an evidentiary~~ a sanction hearing, the Council intends to revoke a law enforcement officer's certification due to ~~its finding a hearing officer's conclusion~~ that the officer committed unprofessional conduct, the Council shall issue ~~a decision~~ an order to that effect.

(B) Within 10 business days ~~from~~ after the date of that ~~decision~~ order, such an officer may voluntarily surrender his or her certification if the hearing officer determined under subdivision 2405(c)(4)(B) of this subchapter that there is a pending labor proceeding related to the Council's unprofessional conduct ~~findings~~ the hearing officer concluded the law enforcement officer committed.

(C) A voluntary surrender of an officer's certification shall remain in effect until the labor proceeding and all appeals are finally adjudicated or until the officer requests a final sanction hearing, whichever occurs first, and thereafter until the Council's final sanction hearing on the matter. At that hearing, the Council may modify its ~~findings and decision~~ sanction order on

the basis of additional evidence set forth in the labor proceeding decision, but shall not be bound by any outcome of the labor proceeding.

(2) If an officer fails to voluntarily surrender his or her certification in accordance with subdivision (1) of this subsection, the Council's original ~~findings and decision~~ sanction order shall take effect.

Sec. 3. 20 V.S.A. § 2410 is amended to read:

§ 2410. COUNCIL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

(a) Creation. There is created the Council Advisory Committee to provide advice to the Council regarding its duties under this subchapter.

(1) The Committee shall specifically:

(A) advise and assist the Council in developing procedures to ensure that allegations of unprofessional conduct by law enforcement officers are investigated fully and fairly; and to ensure that appropriate action is taken in regard to those allegations; and

(B) recommend to the Council any appropriate sanctions to impose on a law enforcement officer's certification upon a hearing officer's concluding that the law enforcement officer committed unprofessional conduct.

(2) The Committee shall be advisory only and shall not have any decision-making authority.

(b) Membership. The Committee shall be composed of five individuals appointed by the Governor. The Governor may solicit recommendations for appointments from the Chair of the Council.

(1) Four of these members shall be public members who during incumbency shall not serve and shall have never served as a law enforcement officer or corrections officer and shall not have an immediate family member who is serving or has ever served as either of those officers.

(2) One of these members shall be a retired law enforcement officer.

(c) Assistance. The Executive Director of the Council or designee shall attend Committee meetings as a resource for the Committee.

(d) Reimbursement. Members of the Committee ~~who are not employees of the State of Vermont and who are not otherwise compensated or reimbursed for their attendance~~ shall be entitled to per diem compensation and reimbursement of expenses ~~pursuant to~~ as permitted under 32 V.S.A. § 1010 for not more than ~~five~~ eight meetings per year. Such payments shall be derived from the budget of the Council.

Sec. 4. 2017 Acts and Resolves No. 56, Sec. 2 is amended to read:

Sec. 2. TRANSITIONAL PROVISIONS TO IMPLEMENT THIS ACT

(a) Effective internal affairs programs.

(1) Law enforcement agencies. On or before ~~July 1, 2018~~ January 1, 2019, each law enforcement agency shall adopt an effective internal affairs program in accordance with 20 V.S.A. § 2402(a) in Sec. 1 of this act.

(2) Vermont Criminal Justice Training Council. On or before ~~April 1, 2018~~ July 1, 2018, the Vermont Criminal Justice Training Council

shall adopt an effective internal affairs program model policy in accordance with 20 V.S.A. § 2402(b) in Sec. 1 of this act.

(b) Alleged law enforcement officer unprofessional conduct. The provisions of 20 V.S.A. chapter 151, subchapter 2 (unprofessional conduct) in Sec. 1 of this act shall apply to law enforcement officer conduct alleged to have been committed on and after the effective date of that subchapter.

(c) Duty to disclose. The requirement for a former law enforcement agency to disclose the reason that a law enforcement officer is no longer employed by the agency as set forth in 20 V.S.A. § 2362a in Sec. 1 of this act shall not apply if there is a binding nondisclosure agreement prohibiting that disclosure that was executed prior to the effective date of that section.

(d) Council rules. The Vermont Criminal Justice Training Council may adopt rules in accordance with 20 V.S.A. § 2411 (Council rules) in Sec. 1 of this act, prior to the effective date of that section.

(e) Council Advisory Committee. The Governor shall make appointments to the Council Advisory Committee set forth in 20 V.S.A. § 2410 in Sec. 1 of this act prior to the effective date of that section.

(f) Annual report of Executive Director. Annually, on or before January 15, beginning in the year ~~2019~~ 2020 and ending in the year ~~2022~~ 2023, the Executive Director of the Vermont Criminal Justice Training Council shall report to the ~~General Assembly~~ House and Senate Committees on Government Operations regarding the Executive Director's analysis of the implementation

of this act and any recommendations he or she may have for further legislative action.

(g) Council, OPR; joint report. On or before October 1, 2017, the Executive Director of the Vermont Criminal Justice Training Council and the Director of the Office of Professional Regulation (Office) shall consult with law enforcement stakeholders and report to the Senate and House Committees on Government Operations on a proposal for the Office to perform duties related to the professional regulation of law enforcement officers.

Sec. 5. 2017 Acts and Resolves No. 56, Sec. 6 is amended to read:

Sec. 6. EFFECTIVE DATES

This act shall take effect on ~~July 1, 2018~~ January 1, 2019, except:

(1) this section and Sec. 2 (transitional provisions to implement this act) shall take effect on passage; and

(2) the following shall take effect on July 1, 2017:

(A) in Sec. 1, 20 V.S.A. chapter 151 (Vermont Criminal Justice Training Council):

(i) § 2351 (creation and purpose of Council);

(ii) § 2351a (definitions);

(iii) § 2352 (Council membership);

(iv) § 2354 (Council meetings);

(v) § 2355 (Council powers and duties), except that subsection (a)

shall take effect on ~~July 1, 2018~~ January 1, 2019;

(vi) § 2358 (minimum training standards; definitions); and

(vii) § 2362a (potential hiring agency; duty to contact former agency);

(B) Sec. 3, 20 V.S.A. § 1812 (definitions); and

(C) Sec. 4, 20 V.S.A. § 1922 (creation of State Police Advisory Commission; members; duties).

Sec. 6. 13 V.S.A. § 3251 is amended to read:

§ 3251. DEFINITIONS

As used in this chapter:

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(9) “Law enforcement officer” means a person certified as a law enforcement officer under the provisions of 20 V.S.A. chapter 151.

Sec. 7. 13 V.S.A. § 3259 is added to read:

§ 3259. SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF A PERSON IN THE CUSTODY OF  
A LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER

(a) No law enforcement officer shall engage in a sexual act with a person whom the officer is detaining, arresting, or otherwise holding in custody or who the officer knows is being detained, arrested, or otherwise held in custody by another officer.

(b) A person who violates subsection (a) of this section shall be imprisoned for not more than five years or fined not more than \$10,000.00, or both.

Sec. 8. EFFECTIVE DATES

This act shall take effect on passage, except that Secs. 1, 20 V.S.A. § 2405 (Council hearing and sanction procedure); 2, 20 V.S.A. § 2406 (permitted Council sanctions); and 3, 20 V.S.A. § 2410 (Council Advisory Committee) shall take effect on January 1, 2019.

and that after passage the title of the bill be amended to read: “An act relating to the Vermont Criminal Justice Training Council’s professional regulation of law enforcement officers”