

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 Senate concurs in the House proposal of amendment with the following proposal of amendment thereto:

By striking out 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) The hearing officer shall report the findings of fact and conclusions of law to a Council Disciplinary Panel 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.

(d) Council Disciplinary Panel.

(1) The Council shall appoint on a case-by-case basis a Council Disciplinary Panel to make sanction recommendations based on the hearing officer's findings of fact and conclusions of law. The Panel shall comprise six members of the Council, at least half of whom shall not be law enforcement officers, and all of whom shall be balanced in regard to labor and management positions to the greatest extent practicable.

(2)(A) Unless the Council grants an extension, the Panel shall meet and make sanction recommendations within 10 days after the date the hearing officer reports his or her findings of fact and conclusions of law to the Panel.

(B) Unless the Council grants an extension, the Panel shall issue its sanction recommendations to the hearing officer within 10 days after its meeting.

(3) The hearing officer shall not be bound by the Panel's sanction recommendations, which shall be advisory only.

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

§ 2406. PERMITTED ~~COUNCIL~~ HEARING OFFICER SANCTIONS

(a) Generally. ~~The Council~~ Within 10 days after receiving the Council Disciplinary Panel's sanction recommendations, the hearing officer may

impose any of the following sanctions on a law enforcement officer's certification upon ~~its finding~~ his or her 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 hearing officer~~ intends to revoke a law enforcement officer's certification due to ~~its finding~~ his or her conclusion that the officer committed unprofessional conduct, the ~~Council hearing officer~~ 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~~ hearing officer's final sanction hearing on the matter. At that hearing, the ~~Council~~ hearing officer may modify ~~its findings and decision~~ his or her 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~~ hearing officer's original ~~findings and decision~~ sanction order shall take effect.

### Sec. 3. REPEAL

20 V.S.A. § 2410 (Council Advisory Committee) is repealed.

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. [Repealed.]~~

(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:

\* \* \*

(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:

(1) Secs. 1, 20 V.S.A. § 2405 (Council hearing and sanction procedure) and 2, 20 V.S.A. § 2406 (permitted hearing officer sanctions) shall take effect on January 1, 2019; and

(2) Sec. 3 (repeal of 20 V.S.A. § 2410 (Council Advisory Committee)) shall take effect on July 1, 2018.

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.