

Maida,

Can you forward to committee. What is the Police Chief in Killington and is willing to testify if it would be helpful.

Jim Harrison

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: Robert Montgomery <whit@killingtontown.com>

Date: March 28, 2018 at 2:57:32 AM EDT

To: "jharrison@leg.state.vt.us" <jharrison@leg.state.vt.us>

Subject: Bill H12

Representative Harrison. Thank you for taking my call today. Below are some of my thoughts on Bill H12. I am not speaking for the Chief's Association, but I believe many feel the same way.

Being a level 3 officer does not make you a better Chief, Lieutenant or Sergeant, or over all a better or more effective leader than a level 2 or 2E officer does. It does not make one more professional or a better officer. There is not specific leadership development training in the Level 3 training. Many of these attributes are honed during the course of a career and through experience on the road, as well as specific leadership training programs like LPO (Leadership in Police Organizations). Each town, community or department has their own needs and reasons why they hired, promoted or elected who they did. Each community knows who best fits this position. This should not be dictated by legislation or other individuals who live outside that community. This legislation will take away that ability and right.

I feel this bill will have an unintended negative consequence of discrediting those officers who hold these ranks of Chiefs, Lieutenants or Sergeants. This can cause confusion and a poor perception of these officers and their abilities, just because they aren't level 3. This can undermine them, their authority and reputations as professional leaders, even though they have held these positions for years and been effective and successful leaders. It is good that the draft includes a "grandfather clause" allowing those who currently hold these positions to keep them. But I feel it may still undermine these current officers.

I feel some of this push for level 3 is beginning to pit a division between 2's and 3's and I would hate to see this happen, we are all on the same team. There are many level 2 officers who have worked 10, 15, 20+ years, who are as knowledgeable as a level 3. As it stands now, a level 2E can do just about the same as a level 3, with the exception of some cases like homicides, suicides, fatalities and sexual assaults. This certified training is offered

separately after level 3 training. Most small agencies turn these cases over to VSP BCI due to resources and experience handling these, even if these agencies have level 3 officers. So I don't feel being level 3 makes one a more effective or better leader over officers or cases.

A strong leader has the ability to know his strengths and weaknesses and surround themselves with good people. No one can be an expert at all subject matter, not even a level 3.

This bill may be workable if it provides block training to attain level 3, not having to start basic training all over again. I believe Senator White and Collamore's committee have a Bill drafted that requires the Academy to start offering this block training to transition from level 2/2E to level 3, not having to restart from day one with basic training. I fully support this part of the Bill as it is progress in the training of Vermont's police officers. Maybe requiring a 2, 2E or even 3 to take specific leadership training like LPO, but this bill should not require one to be just "level 3" in order to hold rank or be chief.

As we all know there is a shortage of officers and money in the state and communities. If this bill goes through as proposed I feel it will cause a real hardship on smaller agencies and towns.

If one needs level 3 to be a Chief, Lieutenant or Sergeant, then LPO should be a required course during level 3 training or should be required training to hold any rank. I am level 2E and there are level 3 chiefs and ranking officers who haven't had LPO like I have.

Also there are no issues with a level 3 reporting to a level 2 or 2E. Level 2 or 2E can tell if a level 3 officer is following policies/procedures, is professional, breaks the law, uses excessive use of force, violates someone rights, etc. Just like a chief reports to a town manager, who as a town manager may not even have any police training.

I do not want to make this personal about me, as there are many qualified level 2 and 2E officers. But I am an example of what is out there. I have been a police officer for 19 years this year, formed the Killington Police Department, received leadership training as a cadet at Norwich University, graduated *summa cum laude* from Norwich, with a major in criminal justice and a concentration in public safety and law enforcement. I am a certified FTO (Field Training Officer) who is certified to train police officers on the road. I am a graduate of the Blue Courage Academy and a certified instructor, who instructs about the nobility of policing. I am a graduate of the LPO program (Leadership in Police Organizations) This is the International Association of Chiefs of Police flagship leadership training program, recognized and sponsored by the VLCT. I can continue... but I think this helps convey that

being level 3 does not necessarily make one a better or more qualified leader or officer over level 2 and level 2E officers.

I feel it may be a good idea to slow this Bill down to talk about some of these ideas, or not move forward with it at all. Things seem to be working ok the way they are now.

Thank you for your time. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Whit Montgomery