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OFFICE OF POLICY AND LEGAL ANALYSIS
BILL ANALYSIS

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TO: **Members, Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety**

FROM: **Jane Orbeton, Legislative Analyst**

DATE: **January 18, 2022**

LD: 1447 An Act To Require Training in Racial Issues, Racial Justice and Social Issues at the Maine Criminal Justice Academy and To Establish Additional Requirements for Law Enforcement Officers and Candidates

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Bill Status

LD 1447, which was sponsored by Rep Gramlich, was heard on May 7 and worked on May 11, 2021. The bill was carried over to the Second Regular Session at the requests of the sponsor, so that additional work could be done on a proposed amendment.

Over the last few weeks testimony in support of the bill has been submitted by Daria Cullen of Sanford, Mary Gibbons Stevens of Gibbons Stevens Law Office in Kittery, Cheria Clow Rollins, LCSW, of Kittery, Meaghan Dunn of Kittery and Angela McIntyre of Rockland.

Rebecca Graham, from Maine Municipal Association, submitted information on January 18 to supplement the testimony submitted in May, 2021. Ms. Graham's information from 2022 notes that imposing pre-service higher education requirements will exacerbate the recruitment and retention crisis and does not address the root problems facing law enforcement. The information states that an estimated 88% of municipal police are hired with an associate degree or higher and lists the types of educational incentives offered by municipalities, from lump sum annual stipends and hourly increases to tuition reimbursement. The information submitted stresses that the current system of training law enforcement officers is underfunded and volunteer-dependent, with more than 60% of municipal agencies contributing volunteer staff to the Maine Criminal Justice Academy. Ms. Graham asked that before action is taken with regard to law enforcement training the Legislature articulate what it wants from law enforcement officers and review and improve the current training system.

Summary

This bill requires basic law enforcement training to include training in racial issues and racial justice, regarding persons with substance use disorder and regarding social issues and law enforcement responses to challenging social situations.

- The bill requires in-service training for law enforcement officers to include information on behavioral health, substance use disorder, homelessness, racial issues and racial justice and other social situations that might be presented to a law enforcement officer.

Beginning with applications for certification and recertification on January 1, 2022, this bill requires an applicant for certification or recertification as a law enforcement officer to have the following qualifications:

- To be legally authorized to work in this country
- To fe at least 21 years of age
- To possess a high school diploma or high school equivalency diploma and an associate degree in criminal justice, sociology, psychology, mental health, substance use disorder or implicit bias
- To submit to an extensive criminal history record check
- To meet the standards for approval established by the Board of Trustees of the Maine Criminal Justice Academy
- To have completed at least 60 credit hours of postsecondary education, which may be fulfilled by course work completed in earning an associate degree, in criminal justice or a related field, including but not limited to courses in sociology, psychology, mental health, substance use disorder and implicit bias.

Testimony
Proponents:
Representative Lori Gramlich presented the bill and spoke in favor. Susan D'Alessandro of Millinocket submitted testimony in favor.

Opponents:
Jack Peck, assistant director of the Maine Criminal Justice Academy, testified in opposition. Richard Desjardins, director of MCJS, and Patricia Caruthers of Brunswick submitted testimony in opposition.

Neither for nor against:
Testifying and submitted testimony neither for nor against were Rebecca Graham, Maine Municipal Association, and Sheriff Tim Carroll, Knox County Sheriff, for the Maine Sheriffs' Association.