



# Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

## Department of Public Safety Standards and Training

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**DATE:** March 15, 2017

**TO:** House Judiciary Committee  
Jeff Barker, Chair  
Andy Olson, Vice-Chair  
Jennifer Williamson, Vice-Chair  
Chris Gorsek  
Mitch Greenlick  
Ann Lininger  
Bill Post  
Tawna Sanchez  
Sherrie Sprenger  
Duane Stark  
Richard Vial

**FROM:** Linsay Hale, Professional Standards Division Director

**SUBJECT:** House Bill 2846 - AMENDED

**Background:** HB 2846 would allow reserve police officers who are sponsored by a law enforcement unit an opportunity to attend the 16-week Basic Police Course delivered by the Department of Public Safety Standards and Training (DPSST). The bill requires sponsored reserve officers pay for the course using cash or any other educational benefit afforded to veteran of the Armed Forces of the United States (G.I. Bill). Upon completion of the training, the reserve officer becomes designated as a certified reserve officer by the sponsoring law enforcement unit and may be employed as a police officer in this state. Additionally, HB 2846 requires the DPSST to increase Basic Police class sizes by no more than a 25% to accommodate training reserve officers. Finally, HB 2846 requires the DPSST to conduct a study and report to the legislature by September 15, 2022 on the impact of this bill on the budgets of law enforcement units and the DPSST, recruitment of reserve officers, certified reserve officers and police officers and the maintenance of public safety.

It is important to note that DPSST is very active in programs that support and assist veterans. A recent survey of our students indicated that approximately 35% of those attending basic training have served in our nation's armed forces. DPSST has staff that work with our veterans to ensure they are receiving the GI Bill benefits that they have earned, and are entitled to. A review of a similar bill in a previous legislative session by the Oregon Department of Veterans Affairs and the Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries indicated the proposals within this legislation would reduce the benefits currently available to officers attending the Academy.

### **Effect of HB 2846 on the DPSST:**

**Basic Police Courses:** HB 2846 requires the DPSST to increase the class size of Basic Police Courses to accommodate the training of reserve officers by no more than 25%. Due to classroom size, training equipment and modularity of training, the current maximum class size for a Basic Police Courses is 40

students. Increasing the class size by up to 25% (up to 10 additional students) would require that the Basic Police students be split up and additional instructors hired or the modification of the DPSST training buildings to allow for 10 additional computers, desks and chairs in order to maintain a safe learning environment.

Additionally, the current 16-week curriculum is built under a modular approach, designed for no more than 40 students. The potential addition of up to ten students would require the curriculum, specifically reality based training and scenarios, be re-evaluated and re-written.

**DPSST Police Certification:** ORS 181.665 grants the DPSST the authority to certify individuals who meet and maintain the minimum standards for employment and training required of police officers, to include certified reserve officers<sup>1</sup>, in this state. These minimum standards have been established by the Board on Public Safety Standards and Training and include, but are not limited to, an age requirement, citizenship, demonstration of academic proficiency and moral fitness standards. [OAR 259-008-0010] Current practice dictates that all standards be met prior to an officer being allowed entrance into any Basic Course offered by the DPSST. HB 2846 does not require these same requirements be met, which could potentially result in reserve officers paying for the Basic Police Course who are ultimately unable to be awarded police certification under the current laws and rules.

Additionally, HB 2846 grants the authority to designate reserve officers as a certified reserve officer to the officer's law enforcement unit upon completion of the Basic Police Course. The bill also allows these officers be employed as a police officer by any law enforcement unit. Again, DPSST would not recognize this certification unless all of the minimum standards and requirements established by law and rule have been met, which would include making application for certification with the DPSST.

**DPSST Business Services:** HB 2846 requires that the training of reserve officers be paid directly to the DPSST, making the DPSST responsible for tracking, invoicing and seeking collections for these accounts. Additionally, as a recipient of educational benefits for veterans, ORS 408.050 requires the DPSST supply on a monthly basis a certified statement to the Director of Veteran's Affairs a "... report of attendance and general attitude and aptitude of each beneficiary, and the number of hours of recitation, lectures or other training scheduled, and a statement of the beneficiary's diligence and progress." The DPSST's Business Services Division is not currently structured or staffed to perform these functions.

Because each reserve officer would be responsible for paying their own way, with cash or other benefits, we would need a full time Accounting Tech 3 to handle the additional 180-190 students' accounts. Additionally, as the Veterans Administration requires, if a student drops or is unable to successfully complete the course, we are required to prorate their refund. And finally, any student who falls behind

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<sup>1</sup> The certified reserve officer program has never been funded. DPSST does not currently certify reserve officers.

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on paying, we would be required to send their account to collections and maintain these collection accounts until paid or seven years after it has become due.

One major goal of this bill is to use GI Bill and other benefits available to veterans, former military member (not everybody who has served in the military is a “veteran”) and family of military members who potentially have benefits available to them. We, as the education provider would be responsible to work with the Oregon Veterans Affairs office to determine what each student’s benefits are.

Additionally, there are requirements that an agency must obtain, and maintain, in order to become an accredited institution, eligible to provide training that is qualified to receive veteran’s benefits. We are currently not considered an accredited institution and would require that the Veterans Services Officer work through the nuanced requirements of the VA.

**Fiscal Impact:** While the ultimate fiscal impact is indeterminate, the DPSST estimates a fiscal impact of just under \$300,000 to account for the hiring of additional staff to administer the program, the purchasing of additional equipment, and any required building modifications. Additionally, the DPSST estimates the addition of 10 students per class will require the DPSST to conduct up to five additional basic police classes per biennium, costing approximately \$2,880,000 (180 students x \$16,000 estimated per student) to cover the known variable expenses (lodging, meals and equipment). Finally, the DPSST would require additional expenditure limitation and projected offsetting revenue added to the budget to account for anticipated losses resulting from the use of facilities, meals and equipment (ammunition) and by reserve officers who fail to make payments as required.

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