

SUBJECT: Exempting reappointed police officers from entrance exam

COMMITTEE: Urban Affairs — committee substitute recommended

VOTE: 7 ayes — Hill, Bailey, Davila, Ehrhardt, Staples, Thompson, Woolley
0 nays
2 absent — Conley, Tillery

WITNESSES: (On original version):
For — James Anderson, Pasadena Police Patrolman’s Union; Dick Brock, Texas Municipal Police Association; Ken Bailey, Texas State Association of Fire Fighters; Jerry Purdon, Texas City Police Department.
Against — None
On — Mike Hines, Texas Commission on Fire Protection.

BACKGROUND: Current law requires former police officers who voluntarily leave a department in good standing and later decide to return to the force to retake the entrance exam before they are reappointed. Another exam generally is administered after retraining.

DIGEST: CSHB 1529 would allow the Firefighters and Police Officers Civil Service Commission to adopt rules allowing former police officers who left a force in good standing be reappointed to the police force without taking the departmental entrance exam. The bill would apply to officers who resigned on or after the bill’s effective date, which would be upon enactment if approved by two thirds of the membership of each house.

SUPPORTERS SAY: Exempting former police officers from retaking a departmental entrance exam would save cities money and time. A police officer who returns generally can be back on the force in a matter of weeks by taking an accelerated course. Current law, however, may delay a return for six to nine months as entrance exams may be offered only twice a year. A former police officer who left in good standing would still be required to take a physical, psychological and polygraph test before being admitted back to the police department.

A police officer could be working on the streets many months sooner, if current law is changed. This would be especially beneficial to city police departments that are already understaffed and need more officers to patrol the city.

OPPONENTS
SAY:

No apparent opposition.

NOTES:

The original version of the bill included firefighters.