

HCS HB 839 -- PEACE OFFICER LICENSURE

SPONSOR: Copeland

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Standing Committee on Public Safety by a vote of 10 to 0. Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Rules- Legislative Oversight by a vote of 9 to 0.

The following is a summary of the House Committee Substitute for HB 839.

This bill provides that, in addition to current requirements for licensure, peace officers must submit to being fingerprinted on or before January 1, 2022, for the purposes of a criminal history background check and enrollment in the state and federal Rap Back Program. Additionally, any time a peace officer is commissioned with a different law enforcement agency he or she must submit to being fingerprinted. The criminal history background check shall include the records of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The resulting report shall be forwarded to the peace officer's law enforcement agency. The Rap Back enrollment shall be for the purposes of peace officer disciplinary reports as required by law. The bill also specifies that all law enforcement agencies must enroll in the state and federal Rap Back programs on or before January 1, 2022, and must remain enrolled. The agencies must take all necessary steps to maintain officer enrollment in the programs.

The following is a summary of the public testimony from the committee hearing. The testimony was based on the introduced version of the bill.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that this will make it a law requiring all officers to be entered into Rap Back to keep their certification up-to-date. This would notify the agency's head if they commit some offense in another state so their employer knows about it. Once an officer has been hired or not hired, agencies do not continue to follow up on whether an officer has committed anything so they do not find out about it. As of Feb 9, there have been over 5,000 hits on Rap Back from various agencies. This would help the community and the citizens know that they want to hold their other officers accountable and they also do not want to work with bad apples. Since 2018 the Department of Public Safety has required officers to be enrolled in Rap Back and, since then, there have been 10 hits from the program. One person was fired, one person denied entry into an agency, one voluntarily withdrew, and a few were dismissed from the academy. If their license is revoked then they would be removed from Rap Back. It is only for active officers. It is only when an officer is arrested for an offense

for which a person can be fingerprinted.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Copeland; Jewish Community Relations Council; Arnie Dienoff; Missouri Fraternal Order of Police; St. Louis Police Officers Association; Kansas City Fraternal Order of Police; Sandra Karsten, Department of Public Safety; Collin Stosberg, Missouri State Highway Patrol; Brad Thielemier, Missouri State Troopers Association; and Kevin Merritt, Missouri Sheriffs United.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.

Written testimony has been submitted for this bill. The full written testimony can be found under Testimony on the bill page on the House website.