

HB 2208 -- LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

SPONSOR: Roberts

This bill subtracts from a taxpayer's federal adjusted gross income for all tax years beginning on or after January 1, 2025, 100% of the amount of any income received by a taxpayer as salary or compensation for his or her service as a law enforcement officer. The term "law enforcement officer" is defined in the bill to have the same meaning as "peace officer" and includes any person employed as a federal law enforcement officer.

The bill also requires the Coordinating Board for Higher Education to make provisions for postsecondary institutions under the Board's jurisdiction to award a tuition and fee waiver for undergraduate courses at postsecondary institutions for the eligible spouse or an eligible child of a Missouri peace officer. No such waiver will be available for more than four years of undergraduate courses at postsecondary institutions. The bill creates the "Peace Officer Educational Loan Forgiveness Program", which allows the Board to reimburse an eligible peace officer, defined in the bill, for educational loans held by the eligible peace officer, beginning January 1, 2025. The bill creates the "Peace Officer Educational Loan Forgiveness Program Fund", and money in the fund must be used to administer the loan forgiveness program established in the bill. The Department of Public Safety will determine the application process for the educational loan forgiveness program and will determine eligibility of applicants.

The bill creates a "Peace Officer Recruitment Commission", which will function as an independent commission funded by state appropriations. The Commission will include seven voting members, enumerated in the bill, appointed by the Governor, with the advice and consent of the Senate. The Commission must meet twice annually and must contract with a reputable public relations firm to create and facilitate a public relations campaign for law enforcement recruitment and retention, and the bill specifies the Commission's obligations with respect to the campaign. The Commission must submit an annual report to the Governor, General Assembly, and each law enforcement association represented in the member roster by December 31st each year.

Lastly, the bill requires each law enforcement agency to provide medical and health insurance coverage for any law enforcement officer who retires from the agency with 20 or more years of service as a law enforcement officer, including retirement for medical reasons. Such coverage must also be made available for purchase to the spouses or dependents of the retired officers and

to the spouses or dependents of deceased retired officers who receive pension benefits.