



PARAC

SB 387: LAW ENFORCEMENT ACADEMIC AND RECRUITMENT NEXT (LEARN) ACT

A Legislative Framework for Recruiting & Educating the Next Generation of Peace Officers

As California's elected leaders continue the dialogue about how we can work together to improve the law enforcement profession, to truly improve public safety outcomes and restore trust in law enforcement, we must recruit a more diverse pool of prospective officers and provide them with the education they need to prepare them for the challenges of modern day policing.

We don't just want to improve our profession; we want to have the best trained and most highly educated peace officers in the country by the end of this decade.

THE PROBLEM

A Clog in the Recruitment Pipeline

We have seen attitudes, tones and aggressions change towards law enforcement. Disrespect toward law enforcement has become a cultural norm nationwide — making it even more difficult to recruit qualified candidates into the field. We've recently seen huge declines of dedicated men and women wanting to start their careers in law enforcement.

In a recent survey of 10,000 officers, only 7% said they would recommend law enforcement as a career. Law enforcement departments across the state are forced to leave open positions vacant or lower their hiring standards.

THE SOLUTION

K-14 Outreach

We must do more to show the value of a career in law enforcement as an honorable profession worthy of pursuing for all of California's youth, regardless of their background, race, gender or financial status.

- Establish statewide outreach teams comprised of active law enforcement, community members and educators.
- Actively share our experiences and provide younger students with the opportunity to learn from and ask questions about the role of law enforcement in our daily lives.
- Provide opportunities for older students to learn about how they can pursue both a career in law enforcement and a college degree.

THE PROBLEM

We Need a Higher Education Requirement

Community policing today is more complex than ever before. The basic functions and duties of an officer have changed immensely over the years, but the level of education we expect of our officers has changed very little. It has also become clear that the 685-hour police academy does not cover the mandated training required by the Peace Officers Standards and Training Commission (POST) and all the new legislative requirements.

Today's line officers and leaders must meet a wide variety of challenges including, evolving technologies, changing laws, new cultural mores, homelessness, drug and alcohol abuse, and a growing mental health crisis. Years of research and academic studies from public safety experts throughout the country consistently show that increased education and training can help officers to address these issues in a way that is proven to increase positive public safety outcomes in our communities.

THE SOLUTION

More Time in the Classroom

Providing both prospective and current officers with more opportunities to earn a college degree and the curriculum needed to prepare them for the rigors and adversities they will face on the job will help us to achieve a cultural shift that will prepare and empower our officers to approach each interaction with the necessary tools and skills, especially when confronting resistance.

- Establish a statewide law enforcement education fund to expand access to college degree programs for both prospective and current officers.
- Develop an expanded curriculum specifically designed to prepare officers to meet the expectations of a modern police force, including classes on mental health, social services, psychology, communication and more – a requirement for officers looking to move up in the ranks and to receive their intermediate and advanced POST certificates.
- Create a modernized degree specific to policing for law enforcement that includes a multi-discipline approach to capture all the various skill-set requirements necessary of the modern police officer.

