



JERRY PETROWSKI

WISCONSIN STATE SENATOR

Senate Bill 373 Relating to Law Enforcement Training Standards

February 12, 2014

Senate Committee on Transportation, Public Safety, and Veterans and Military Affairs

Honorable chairman and committee members, thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill 373, relating to Law Enforcement Training Standards.

Under current law, the Law Enforcement Training Standards Board must establish minimum educational and training standards for law enforcement officers, tribal law enforcement officers, jail officers, juvenile detention officers and constables. This 15-member board is appointed by the Governor and among its many duties is certifying individuals who have met the standards to become a law enforcement officer.

Myself and Representative Garey Bies are introducing this bill with guidance from the Department of Justice, to make changes to training and educational standards for law enforcement academy students, recruits and temporary or probationary employees.

Many of the required professional standards, which improve public safety, have not been updated for some time. This bill provides flexibility to the board to adapt quickly to ever changing law enforcement needs. It allows the board to determine the specific training curricula necessary including: number of training hours, required subjects, and performances measures. It is important to note that nearly all law enforcement academies go above and beyond the current statutory requirements in training their officers.

Important provisions of the bill do the following:

- Requires fingerprints of law enforcement students to be used to conduct background checks
- Prohibits persons convicted of a felony or misdemeanor related to domestic violence from participating in basic training
- Requires the board to establish model standards for use by law enforcement agencies in the areas of police pursuits, handgun proficiency and domestic violence incidents

29TH SENATE DISTRICT



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- Provides greater flexibility for determining how agencies are reimbursed for expenses for the training and education of officers
- Doesn't preclude any law enforcement agency or sheriff from setting higher standards than the minimum established by the board

We have introduced two amendments to enhance this bill. The first amendment corrects some slight oversights and ensures procedure applies across all professions included in the bill. The amendment does the following:

- Clarifies that jailers and detention officers are subject to the fingerprint and background check requirements
- Clarifies that jailers and detention officers are prohibited from taking part in preparatory programs if they have been convicted of felony

There is also an amendment which adds a seat on the curriculum advisory committee for a representative of a two year college or four year university. This seat is specifically for any college or university who provides a course or program relating to what is taught during law enforcement training. It is important that institutions that provide this type of education are able to effectively communicate and collaborate with those responsible for setting curricula in the academies. Additionally this second amendment includes language that clarifies that academies must include training specifically on domestic violence investigations and incidents.

Again, thank you for hearing this bill and I will be happy to answer any questions you may have.

29TH SENATE DISTRICT



**Testimony of Representative Garey Bies
Committee on Transportation, Public Safety, Veterans and Military Affairs**

Senate Bill 373 –Law Enforcement Training Standards

Chairman Petrowski, committee members. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on Senate Bill 373, relating to Law Enforcement Training Standards.

Under current law, the Law Enforcement Standards Board establishes minimum educational and training standards for law enforcement officers, tribal law enforcement officers, jail officers, juvenile detention officers and constables. The 15-member board is appointed by the Governor and among its many duties is certifying individuals who meet the standards as qualified to be officers.

We're introducing this bill with guidance from the Department of Justice, to make several changes to the training and educational standards for law enforcement students, recruits and temporary or probationary employees.

Many professional standards that improve public safety haven't been updated for some time. This bill gives the board the flexibility to determine the specific training curricula necessary for each category of officer including: required subjects, number of training hours, and measures of performance.

It further allows the board to amend the curriculum as needed to be responsive to technological changes or conditions affecting the public interest.

Important provisions of the bill include:

- Requires fingerprints of law enforcement students to be used to conduct background checks
- Prohibits persons convicted of a felony or of a misdemeanor related to domestic violence from participating in basic training
- Requires the board to establish model standards for use by law enforcement agencies in the areas of police pursuits and handgun proficiency
- Greater flexibility for determining how agencies are reimbursed for expenses for the training and education of officers
- Doesn't preclude any law enforcement agency or sheriff from setting higher standards than the minimum established by the board

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We've also introduced two amendments to clarify a couple things that were omitted in the original draft and to address concerns that were raised at the Assembly public hearing. The changes include:

- Requiring fingerprints/background checks of jailers and detention officers
- Prohibiting prospective jailers and detention officers from taking part in a preparatory program if they've been convicted of a felony
- Including Domestic Violence Investigations as part of the recommended coursework for on-going training
- Allowing a representative from tech colleges, 2-year, and 4-year colleges a spot on the curriculum advisory committee, a sub-committee of the Training and Standards Board

Once again thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill 373. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.



**STATE OF WISCONSIN
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February 12, 2014

**WRITTEN COMMENTS OF THE WISCONSIN LAW ENFORCEMENT STANDARDS BOARD ON
SENATE BILL 373**

Honorable Members of the Senate Committee on Transportation, Public Safety, and Veterans and Military Affairs:

My name is Joseph Collins, and I am the Vice Chairperson of the Wisconsin Law Enforcement Standards Board as well as the Chief of the City of Two Rivers Police Department. I am here today to testify in support of Senate Bill ("SB") 373.

First, I want to thank Chairperson Petrowski for holding a public hearing on SB 373. I also want to thank Senators Petrowski, Taylor, and Lehman, along with Representatives Bies, Ballweg, Larson, Ott, Richards and Thiesfeldt for their sponsorship of SB 373.

Wisconsin Statute § 165.85 establishes the categories for training and standards of criminal justice professionals in Wisconsin. These include:

Law Enforcement and Tribal Law Enforcement Officers
Jail Officers
Secure Juvenile Detention Officers

The Law Enforcement Standards Board ("Board"), a 15-member body appointed by the Governor, sets minimum employment, education and training standards for Wisconsin's criminal justice professionals. The Board certifies criminal justice professionals who meet the standards as qualified to be officers. Since its creation in 1969, the Board has consulted with other governmental agencies and associations regarding the development of training schools and curriculum for preparatory law enforcement, jail and secure juvenile detention officer training. It conducts research to improve the training and standards of Wisconsin's criminal justice professions. The Board also monitors and evaluates compliance with its standards.

To assist in establishing curriculum requirements, the Board appoints a 13-member Curriculum Advisory Committee comprised of 6 police chiefs, 6 sheriffs and the training director of the Wisconsin State Patrol Academy. The Curriculum Advisory Committee advises the Board in the establishment of curriculum for law enforcement, tribal law enforcement, jail and secure juvenile detention officers. The Training and Standards Bureau acts as the staffing arm of the Board. The Training and Standards Bureau utilizes topical advisory committees comprised of subject matter experts from across the state to develop curriculum that is then considered by the Curriculum Advisory Committee and, eventually, the Law Enforcement Standards Board.

As the Vice Chairperson of the Board, I appear today at the request of the Board and the Training and Standards Bureau to request your support of SB 373. This bill serves important public safety interests by

modernizing the professional requirements for Wisconsin's criminal justice professionals. The principle changes in the bill include:

- SB 373 requires the completion of preparatory law enforcement officer training by constables and marshals who hold law enforcement duties and who meet the definition of a law enforcement officer as defined in § 165.85(2)(c).
- SB 373 gives the Law Enforcement Standards Board the ability to decertify law enforcement, tribal law enforcement, jail and/or secure juvenile detention officers who falsify information to obtain or maintain certification status; who are certified as the result of an administrative error; or who are convicted of a felony or of any offense which if committed in Wisconsin could be punished as a felony; and/or who are convicted of a misdemeanor crime of domestic violence.
- SB 373 requires fingerprinting of law enforcement students for the purpose of criminal background checks. Without this change, we cannot access important FBI records, such as criminal arrests and convictions that occurred outside Wisconsin.
- SB 373 increases the minimum preparatory training hours for law enforcement and tribal law enforcement officers to 600 hours. The current minimum standard is 400 hours, however the Board approved a 520-hour academy in 2002, and all Board-certified training providers have provided the 520-hour academy since 2004. On December 3, 2013, the Board approved competencies and learning objectives for a 700-hour law enforcement officer training academy. According to the U.S. Department of Justice - Bureau of Justice Statistics, the national average for basic law enforcement officer training is 761 hours, or about 19 weeks.
- SB 373 increases the minimum preparatory training hours for jail and secure juvenile detention officers to 160 hours. The current minimum standard is 120 hours of preparatory training for jail and secure juvenile detention officers. All Board-certified training providers of preparatory jail officer training currently provide a 160-hour academy.
- SB 373 removes reference to specific training topics. The training topics mentioned in § 165.85 were not added by the Board. SB 373 permits the Board to establish the specifics of the training curriculum for preparatory law enforcement, tribal law enforcement, jail and secure juvenile detention officer training by written policy of the board. This provides the Board the ability to update curriculum as needed, and in a timely manner, as opposed to having to wait for statute or administrative code changes.
- SB 373 decreases the time allowed for completion of preparatory training to a standard 12 months. Currently, full-time law enforcement and tribal law enforcement officers have up to 24 months and part-time employees have up to 36 months to complete preparatory training. The 12-month time period may be extended by the Board upon a showing of good cause by a recruit or a recruit's employer.
- SB 373 adds an annual handgun qualification training requirement for law enforcement and tribal law enforcement officers. The curriculum for the handgun qualification course shall be based upon model standards established by the Board.

If this legislation is passed, it will result in significant improvements to training, standards and the process of development and delivery of professional criminal justice services leading to a safer Wisconsin.

I along with the members of the Board and the Training and Standards Bureau support SB 373, and I urge you to do so as well.

To whom it may concern,

My name is Paige Collins and I am currently a probationary patrol officer with the Neenah Police Department. I attended Marian University, a four year college, and obtained a bachelors degree in Criminal Justice. I then went to the police academy at the Northeast Wisconsin Technical College (NWTC).

It was brought to my attention that some believe that going to a police academy after attending a four year college would be redundant. This is very concerning to me. I learned more than I could even imagine by attending the police academy after completing my schooling. I learned how to push myself further than I physically thought possible. I learned how to make important decisions under stress, how to recognize dangerous behaviors, and how to tactically respond to any situation.

It is easy to write on paper how one would act under stressful situations. In my four year college, I was taught how to think critically and how to apply it to situations that I may encounter in a Law Enforcement career. However, anyone can write how they believe they are going to react when they are in a non-stressful environment and are given a few hours, even days, to come up with a response. In the police academy, a scenario was presented and we were given seconds to critically and tactically think of a response, just like it would encounter in the field. Most of the scenarios were stressful in nature and made even the most academically advanced recruit stumble.

To be a police officer, it takes more than knowing the laws/statutes, how to write reports, and philosophy of Criminal Justice. Yes, all of that is helpful in this career. However, being able to show that you can apply all that you have learned throughout your education is what the police academy was all about. In the police academy, we were put through stressful scenarios, hands on physical training, and had to demonstrate that we could perform everyday tasks that officers would have to engage in while in the field.

In my four years at Marian University, most of the days I was behind a desk listening to lectures explaining what the Criminal Justice System was all about. We learned the history behind the Criminal Justice System, the different sections we could pursue a career in, and the philosophy behind it. I was encouraged to use critical thinking and to challenge what we already knew about the Criminal Justice System by doing research and writing papers. Very seldom was I asked to demonstrate any type of task, exercise, or tactic.

When I was hired by the Neenah Police Department, I was "tested" in the first few weeks about what I had learned by going through some stressful scenarios. I was then put in the field with a field training officer who wanted to watch me perform tasks on calls. If I had not gone through the police academy, I would have been completely lost and unprepared for what I have been through. I would have never been taught how to conduct a traffic stop, communicate with a difficult subject, or even how to collect the essential information from an interview. There are many times during a shift that I think back to what I have learned during the police academy to help me on a call, especially while under stressful situations.

During my four years at Marian University, I learned what the Criminal Justice System was. During my time in the police academy at NWTC, I learned what it was to be a police officer.

Paige Collins

4 year college Criminal Justice courses:

Freshman year:

- Orientation to Criminal Justice
- Introduction to Criminal Justice
- Constitutional Law
- Juvenile Law

Sophomore year:

- Report writing in Criminal Justice
- Criminology/Victimology
- Correctional Institutions
- History of Terrorism

Junior year:

- Law Enforcement administration
- Community-Based Corrections
- Understanding Gang Formation & Behavior
- Spanish for Law Enforcement
- Criminal Law
- Race, Gender and Ethnicity
- Philosophy of Law

Senior year:

- Critical Issues in Criminal Justice
- Principles of Professional Practice
- Comparative Criminal Justice
- Capstone project in Criminal Justice
- Drugs and Behavior