

North Carolina Sheriffs' Association

Serving the Sheriffs and Citizens of North Carolina since 1922

Weekly Legislative Report - Special Edition



June 11, 2009

STATE BUDGET BILL – HOUSE VERSION

IMPORTANT UPDATES

We have been working diligently this week and last week and have been successful in getting several adverse provisions removed from the proposed House version of the State Budget Bill, which is Senate Bill 202, Appropriations Act of 2009. We are grateful to many legislators for their assistance in removing these adverse provisions from the House version of the State Budget Bill.

The House is considering this legislation today [Thursday], and the current plan is for it to receive final consideration on Friday before being sent to the Senate. Of course, as is customary in the legislative process, this schedule could change later this week. The status of each of the budget provisions indicated below is current as of Thursday afternoon. While we do not expect any surprises, we will be monitoring all of these provisions throughout the remainder of the week as this legislation is being considered by the House. Friday's NCSA Weekly Legislative Report will include updates on these provisions as well.

The provisions of concern are detailed below:

1. Criminal Justice Officer Certification Fees --- This provision applies to law enforcement officers and all other criminal justice officers, which includes Department of Correction personnel, Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention personnel and various other criminal justice personnel.

This provision would require all currently certified law enforcement and criminal justice officers to pay a \$250 fee this year for officers who are required to get in-service training by the Sheriffs' Commission or the Criminal Justice Commission. It would also require criminal justice officers when they are first certified to pay a fee of \$250. Thereafter, each criminal justice officer would have to pay an annual fee of \$100 upon completion of in-service training required by the Criminal Justice Standards Commission or the Sheriffs' Standards Commission.

An additional paragraph in this provision would require each officer to pay a fee of \$25 each time a certification is issued to that officer. This would include certifications as a radar operator, general instructor, specialized instructor, etc.

The North Carolina Sheriffs' Association is opposed to all of these criminal justice officer certification fees. **All of these criminal justice officer certification fees have been deleted today [Thursday] from the proposed House version of the State Budget Bill.**

2. Law Enforcement Officers Pay Community College Tuition --- Currently, law enforcement officers may attend job-related courses in the North Carolina Community College System without paying any registration fees. This proposal would require law enforcement officers (and firefighters and EMS personnel, except volunteers) attending curriculum courses at a community college to pay a fee of \$45 per credit hour and to pay a fee of \$45 per course for continuing education courses. The original proposal for this fee was \$25, then it was raised to \$36 and the current discussion is that the fee would be \$45. According to General Assembly staff estimates, these fees will cost \$15 million annually statewide for all public safety officers. The North Carolina Sheriffs' Association is opposed to this provision. **This provision has been deleted from the proposed House version of the State Budget Bill.**
3. Counties Keep Prisoners Up To Six Months --- Currently, prisoners sentenced up to 90 days imprisonment must serve their sentence in the county jail. This proposal would extend that time period so that prisoners sentenced to serve up to six months would serve their entire six month sentence in the county jail. A recent survey of the Department of Correction's Division of Prisons indicated that there were 1,700 misdemeanants in the State prison system serving sentences between 90 days and six months. A recent updated estimate projects that shifting these prisoners to county jails would cost counties approximately \$42 million per year. The North Carolina Sheriffs' Association is opposed to this provision. **This provision has been deleted from the proposed House version of the State Budget Bill.**
4. Eliminate Jail Misdemeanant Payments --- This provision would delete the \$18 per day reimbursement paid to counties for prisoners serving their sentences of 30-90 days in the county jail. This provision would have resulted in a loss of \$10 million to counties across North Carolina. The North Carolina Sheriffs' Association is opposed to this provision. **This provision has been deleted from the proposed House version of the State Budget Bill.**
5. SBI Triad Laboratory --- There was a budget provision that would close the State Bureau of Investigation (SBI) Triad Laboratory in Guilford County. The North Carolina Sheriffs' Association opposes closing the SBI Triad Lab. **This provision has been deleted from the proposed House version of the State Budget Bill.**
6. Increase Court Costs for Sheriffs' Standards and Criminal Justice Standards --- This proposal would increase court costs by \$2. \$1.65 of this amount would be used to fund the Criminal Justice Standards Division and \$.35 of these funds would be used to fund the Sheriffs' Standards Division. The North Carolina Sheriffs' Association supports this provision. **This provision is also supported by the Sheriffs' Commission and the Criminal Justice Commission, and this provision, as we have requested, remains in the proposed House version of the State Budget Bill.**

If you would like a copy of any of the legislation introduced or considered by this year's General Assembly, copies are available on the General Assembly's World Wide Web site: www.ncleg.net.

You may also receive one copy of as many bills as you are interested in, free of charge, by calling the General Assembly's Printed Bills office at 919/733-5648. They will need to know if it is a House bill or Senate bill and the bill number. (For example, Senate Bill 8).

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