

SENATE, No. 324

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

Introduced Pending Technical Review by Legislative Counsel

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 1996 SESSION

By Senator LITTELL

1 AN ACT concerning the qualifications for initial appointment as a local
2 law enforcement officer, amending N.J.S.40A:14-122 and
3 supplementing chapter 14 of Title 40A of the New Jersey Statutes.

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5 **BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State
6 of New Jersey:

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8 1. N.J.S.40A:14-122 is amended to read as follows:
9 40A:14-122. General qualifications of members of police
10 department and force; temporary appointments; absences from duty.

11 Except as otherwise provided by law, no person shall be appointed
12 as a member of the police department and force, unless he:

13 (1) is a citizen of the United States;

14 (2) is sound in body and of good health sufficient to satisfy the
15 board of trustees of the police and firemen's retirement system of New
16 Jersey as to his eligibility for membership in the retirement system;

17 (3) has a high school diploma or an equivalency certificate and is
18 able to read, write and speak the English language well and
19 intelligently;

20 (4) is of good moral character, and has not been convicted of any
21 criminal offense involving moral turpitude.

22 The appointing body, officer or officers of the municipality when
23 authorized so to do, may employ such officers and other personnel for
24 said police department and force as temporary employees in
25 emergencies, or for certain specified parts of the year, as needed.

26 Except as otherwise provided by law, any permanent member or
27 officer of such police department and force who shall be absent from
28 duty without just cause or leave of absence, for a continuous period
29 of 5 days, shall cease to be a member of such police department and
30 force.

31 (cf: P.L.1971, c.443, s.4)

EXPLANATION - Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets [thus] in the above bill is not enacted and intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined thus is new matter.

1 2. (New section) In any municipality wherein Title 11A (Civil
2 Service) of the New Jersey Statutes is operative, the governing body
3 of the municipality may establish, by ordinance, minimum educational
4 requirements for applicants for initial appointment to the police
5 department which exceed those set forth in paragraph (3) of
6 N.J.S.40A:14-122.

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8 3. This act shall take effect January 1 next following enactment.

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STATEMENT

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13 This bill raises the minimum educational qualifications for
14 applicants for initial appointment to a municipal police department.

15 Under current law (N.J.S.40A:14-122), applicants are only required
16 to be able to read, write and speak English "well and effectively." This
17 bill would require applicants also to have earned either a high school
18 diploma or an equivalency certificate. Applicants for firefighter
19 positions have been statutorily required to have high school diplomas
20 since 1981.

21 The bill also authorizes municipalities operating under Title 11A
22 (Civil Service) of the New Jersey Statutes to adopt ordinances which
23 would require even higher educational standards for initial
24 appointment to the police department.

25 Law enforcement officers are highly paid professionals who are
26 accorded great authority and responsibility in our society. It is in the
27 public interest to raise the minimum educational requirements for those
28 seeking to enter this profession.

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33 Raises educational requirements for certain law enforcement officers;
34 permits civil service municipalities to adopt higher educational
35 requirements.