

ASSEMBLY, No. 4558

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

220th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED SEPTEMBER 22, 2022

Sponsored by:

Assemblywoman SHANIQUE SPEIGHT

District 29 (Essex)

Assemblywoman VERLINA REYNOLDS-JACKSON

District 15 (Hunterdon and Mercer)

Assemblyman BENJIE E. WIMBERLY

District 35 (Bergen and Passaic)

Co-Sponsored by:

Assemblyman Spearman and Assemblywoman Jaffer

SYNOPSIS

Requires police misconduct training course be included in police basic training curriculum.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 11/20/2023)

1 AN ACT concerning basic training for police officers,
2 supplementing Title 52 of the Revised Statutes, and amending
3 P.L.1961, c.56.

4
5 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*
6 *of New Jersey:*

7
8 1. a. The Legislature find and declares:

9 (1) The highest priority of New Jersey's law enforcement
10 officers is to safeguard the life, dignity, and liberty of all persons,
11 without prejudice toward anyone.

12 (2) Law enforcement officers shall be guided by the principle of
13 reverence for human life in all investigative, enforcement, and other
14 contacts between officers and members of the public.

15 (3) Law enforcement officers have a moral, ethical, and
16 constitutional obligation to protect and serve the citizens of this
17 State, regardless of race or ethnicity, sexual and gender identities,
18 mental and physical disabilities, and religious beliefs.

19 (3) The injury and death of unarmed African American men and
20 women, and other people of color, due to police brutality and
21 excessive use of force violates a law enforcement officer's most
22 basic obligation towards the citizens of this State.

23 (4) Not only have the communities of the victims of police
24 misconduct suffered, but these incidents continue to inflict
25 intergenerational harm and trauma to families.

26 (5) Police misconduct has sparked protests in all 50 states and
27 many countries around the world.

28 (6) Far too many individuals have sustained severe injury or
29 died as a result of the illegal actions and mistakes of law
30 enforcement officers.

31 (7) On July 17, 2014, Eric Garner, a 43 year-old African
32 American man, died as a result of an illegal chokehold administered
33 by a law enforcement officer attempting to arrest Garner for
34 allegedly selling cigarettes.

35 (8) On April 12, 2015, Freddie Carlos Gray Jr., a 25 year-old
36 African American man, died as a result of severe spinal cord
37 injuries sustained while being transported without a seatbelt in a
38 police van after being wrongfully arrested for the legal possession
39 of a knife.

40 (9) On March 13, 2020, Breonna Taylor, a 26 year-old African
41 American woman, was shot to death in her sleep by police when
42 they raided her home.

43 (10) On May 23, 2020, Maurice Gordon, a 28 year-old unarmed
44 African American man, was killed in New Jersey after being pulled
45 over for allegedly speeding.

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

Matter underlined thus is new matter.

1 (11) On May 25, 2020, George Floyd, a 46 year-old unarmed
2 African American man, died after being pinned down by a white
3 police officer in Minneapolis, Minnesota; his alleged offense was
4 using a counterfeit \$20 bill.

5 (12) On June 19, 2022, Randy Cox, a 36 year-old African
6 American man, was partially paralyzed as a result of injuries
7 sustained while being transported without a seat belt in the back of
8 a police van.

9 (13) In addition, many any other lives have been negatively
10 impacted or cut short as a result of police misconduct.

11 (14) The purpose of this act is to educate law enforcement
12 officers regarding the dangers and consequences of improper or
13 illegal police practices by modifying the basic training curriculum
14 to instruct recruits on police misconduct using real life examples
15 and case studies to educate recruits regarding these tragic events
16 and their impact on victims, families, communities, and law
17 enforcement practices nationwide.

18 b. The Police Training Commission shall include in the basic
19 training course curriculum a modified police misconduct training
20 course developed or identified pursuant to subsection c. of this
21 section.

22 c. The Police Training Commission shall develop or identify
23 course materials concerning misconduct in policing. The Police
24 Training Commission shall include these course materials in the
25 basic training course curriculum for law enforcement officers.
26 Successful completion of the police misconduct training course
27 shall provide a law enforcement officer with a total of three credits
28 towards the total credit requirement of the basic training
29 curriculum. The police misconduct training course shall include,
30 but not be limited to, the following subjects:

31 (1) analysis and discussion of real life examples of the injury or
32 death of unarmed African American men and women, and other
33 people of color, due to police brutality and excessive use of force
34 by law enforcement and how those tragic events could have been
35 avoided;

36 (2) policing in the age of smartphones, including how
37 smartphones have aided citizens in proving instances of police
38 misconduct, resulting in law enforcement officers and police
39 departments increasingly being held accountable for misconduct;

40 (3) a law enforcement officer's duty to intervene when
41 witnessing law enforcement misconduct, even if the misconduct is
42 being perpetrated by a superior officer, and using the murder of
43 George Floyd as a case study;

44 (4) the consequences of poor policing, using the murder of
45 Breonna Taylor as a case study to illustrate how mistakes may
46 erode trust in the community and result in civil unrest, which
47 impacts law enforcement practices nationwide;

1 (5) understanding the impact of bias in policing and the impact
2 bias had in the murder of George Floyd; and

3 (6) how law enforcement officers should prepare for and cope
4 with civil unrest and protests resulting from police misconduct.

5
6 2. Section 6 of P.L.1961, c.56 (C.52:17B-71) is amended to
7 read as follows:

8 6. The commission shall establish requisite standards for the
9 training of law enforcement officers and oversee the
10 implementation of those standards.

11 The commission shall have the authority:

12 a. To prescribe standards for the approval and continuation of
13 approval of schools at which police training courses authorized by
14 this act and in-service police training courses shall be conducted,
15 including but not limited to currently existing regional, county,
16 municipal, and police chief association police training schools or at
17 which basic training courses and in-service training courses shall be
18 conducted for State and county juvenile and adult correctional
19 police officers and juvenile detention officers;

20 b. To approve and issue certificates of approval to these
21 schools, to inspect the schools from time to time, and to revoke any
22 approval or certificate issued to the schools;

23 c. To prescribe the curriculum, the minimum courses of study,
24 attendance requirements, equipment and facilities, and standards of
25 operation for these schools and prescribe psychological and
26 psychiatric examinations for police recruits;

27 d. To prescribe minimum qualifications for instructors at these
28 schools and to certify, as qualified, instructors for approved police
29 training schools and to issue appropriate certificates to the
30 instructors; instructors of the police misconduct training course
31 shall hold an advanced degree in sociology, or another related field,
32 from an accredited college or university;

33 e. To certify law enforcement officers who have satisfactorily
34 completed training programs and to issue appropriate certificates to
35 the officers;

36 f. To advise and consent in the appointment of an
37 administrator of police services by the Attorney General pursuant to
38 section 8 of P.L.1961, c.56 (C.52:17B-73);

39 g. (Deleted by amendment, P.L.1985, c.491)

40 h. To make rules and regulations as may be reasonably
41 necessary or appropriate to accomplish the purposes and objectives
42 of this act;

43 i. To make a continuous study of police training methods and
44 training methods for law enforcement officers and to consult and
45 accept the cooperation of any recognized federal or State law
46 enforcement agency or educational institution;

47 j. To consult and cooperate with universities, colleges, and
48 institutes in the State for the development of specialized courses of

1 study for law enforcement officers in police science **and** , police
2 administration , and police misconduct;

3 k. To consult and cooperate with other departments and
4 agencies of the State concerned with police training or the training
5 of law enforcement officers;

6 l. To participate in unified programs and projects relating to
7 police training and the training of law enforcement officers
8 sponsored by any federal, State, or other public or private agency;

9 m. To perform other acts as may be necessary or appropriate to
10 carry out its functions and duties as set forth in this act;

11 n. To extend the time limit for satisfactory completion of police
12 training programs or programs for the training of law enforcement
13 officers upon a finding that health, extraordinary workload, or other
14 factors have, singly or in combination, effected a delay in the
15 satisfactory completion of the training program;

16 o. (1) To furnish approved schools, for inclusion in their regular
17 police training courses and curriculum, with information concerning
18 the advisability of high-speed chases, the risk caused by them, and
19 the benefits resulting from them, and to include any other relevant
20 police training courses that will assist the commission in providing
21 efficient training;

22 (2) To consult the New Jersey State Police with respect to its
23 administration of police training courses or programs for the
24 training of law enforcement officers to be certified as a Drug
25 Recognition Expert for detecting, identifying, and apprehending
26 drug-impaired motor vehicle operators, and to consult with the
27 Cannabis Regulatory Commission established by 31 of P.L.2019,
28 c.153 (C.24:6I-24) with respect to any aspects of the course
29 curricula that focus on impairment from the use of cannabis items
30 as defined by section 3 of P.L.2021, c.16 (C.24:6I-33) or marijuana.

31 p. (Deleted by amendment, P.L.2022, c.65)

32 q. To administer and distribute the monies in the Law
33 Enforcement Officers Training and Equipment Fund established by
34 section 9 of P.L.1996, c.115 (C.2C:43-3.3) and make rules and
35 regulations for the administration and distribution of the monies as
36 may be necessary or appropriate to accomplish the purpose for
37 which the fund was established.

38 (cf: P.L.2022, c.65, s.8)

39
40 3. This act shall take effect on the first day of the six month
41 next following enactment.

42 43 44 STATEMENT

45
46 This bill requires the Police Training Commission to develop or
47 identify course materials concerning police misconduct to be
48 included in the police basic training curriculum.

1 The highest priority of New Jersey's law enforcement officers is
2 to safeguard the life, dignity, and liberty of all persons, without
3 prejudice toward anyone. Law enforcement officers are required to
4 be guided by the principle of reverence for human life in all
5 investigative, enforcement, and other contacts between officers and
6 members of the public. Law enforcement officers have a moral,
7 ethical, and constitutional obligation to protect and serve the
8 citizens of this State, regardless of race or ethnicity, sexual and
9 gender identities, mental and physical disabilities, and religious
10 beliefs.

11 The injury and death of unarmed African American men and
12 women, and other people of color, due to police brutality and
13 excessive use of force violates a law enforcement officer's most
14 basic obligation towards the citizens of this State. Not only have
15 the communities of the victims of police misconduct suffered, but
16 these incidents continue to inflict intergenerational harm and trauma
17 to families. Police misconduct has sparked protests in all 50 states
18 and many countries around the world. Far too many individuals
19 have sustained severe injury or died as a result of the illegal actions
20 and mistakes of law enforcement officers.

21 The purpose of this bill is to educate law enforcement officers
22 regarding the dangers and consequences of improper or illegal
23 police practices by modifying the basic training curriculum to
24 instruct recruits on police misconduct using real life examples and
25 case studies to instruct recruits regarding these tragic events and the
26 impact these events have had on victims, families, communities,
27 and law enforcement practices nationwide.

28 Under the bill, the Police Training Commission is to develop or
29 identify course materials concerning misconduct in policing to be
30 taught by an instructor with an advanced degree in sociology, or
31 another related field, and included in the basic training course for
32 police officers. The police misconduct training course is to provide
33 three credits towards the total credit requirement of the police basic
34 training curriculum.

35 The police misconduct training course is required to include, but
36 not be limited to the following subjects: (1) analysis and discussion
37 of real life examples of the injury or death of unarmed African
38 American men and women, and other people of color, due to police
39 brutality and excessive use of force by law enforcement and how
40 those tragic events could have been avoided; (2) policing in the age
41 of smartphones, including how smartphones have aided citizens in
42 proving instances of police misconduct, resulting in law
43 enforcement officers and police departments increasingly being
44 held accountable for misconduct; (3) a law enforcement officer's
45 duty to intervene when witnessing law enforcement misconduct,
46 even if the misconduct is being perpetrated by a superior officer,
47 and using the murder of George Floyd as a case study; (4) the
48 consequences of poor policing, using the murder of Breonna Taylor

1 as a case study to illustrate how mistakes may erode trust in the
2 community and result in civil unrest, which impacts law
3 enforcement practices nationwide; (5) understanding the impact of
4 bias in policing and the impact bias had in the murder of George
5 Floyd; and (6) how law enforcement officers should prepare for and
6 cope with civil unrest and protests resulting from police
7 misconduct.