

SENATE, No. 3083

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED OCTOBER 29, 2020

Sponsored by:
Senator TROY SINGLETON
District 7 (Burlington)

SYNOPSIS

Imposes minimum age and educational requirements for county and municipal law enforcement officers with certain exceptions.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



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

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

8
9 1. N.J.S.40A:14-122 is amended to read as follows:
10 40A:14-122. Except as otherwise provided by law, no person
11 shall be appointed as a member of the police department and force,
12 unless **【he】** the person:

13 (1) is a citizen of the United States and at least 21 years of age;

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
16 New Jersey as to **【his】** the person's eligibility for membership in
17 the retirement system;

18 (3) is able to read, write, and speak the English language well
19 and intelligently;

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

22 (5) has successfully earned:

23 (a) an associate degree;

24 (b) at least 60 college credits and possesses a minimum of 24
25 months of satisfactory employment or military service; or

26 (c) a minimum of 30 college credits and served at least 24
27 months of active duty military service with an honorable discharge;
28 or

29 (6) has served at least 36 months of active duty military service
30 with an honorable discharge.

31 The college degree and credits required pursuant to this section
32 shall be obtained from an institution of higher education which is
33 licensed to award academic degrees by the New Jersey Commission
34 of Higher Education, or a similar entity in another jurisdiction. The
35 military service shall have been completed within three years prior
36 to the application to the police department. Nothing in this section
37 shall prohibit a governing body from establishing minimum
38 requirements which are more stringent than those set forth in this
39 section.

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

44 Except as otherwise provided by law, any permanent member or
45 officer of such police department and force who shall be absent

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 from duty without just cause or leave of absence, for a continuous
2 period of **【5】** five days, shall cease to be a member of such police
3 department and force.

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

5
6 2. (New section) Except as otherwise herein provided, a person
7 shall not be appointed as a member or officer of the police
8 department and force in any county pursuant to N.J.S.40A:14-106
9 unless the person:

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

11 (2) is at least 21 years of age; and

12 (3) has successfully earned:

13 (a) an associate degree;

14 (b) at least 60 college credits and possesses a minimum of 24
15 months of satisfactory employment or military service; or

16 (c) a minimum of 30 college credits and served at least 24
17 months of active duty military service with an honorable discharge;
18 or

19 (4) has served at least 36 months of active duty military service
20 with an honorable discharge.

21 The college degree and credits required pursuant to this section
22 shall be obtained from an institution of higher education which is
23 licensed to award academic degrees by the New Jersey Commission
24 of Higher Education, or a similar entity in another jurisdiction.

25 The military service shall have been completed within three
26 years prior to the application to the police department.

27 Nothing in this section shall prohibit a governing body from
28 establishing minimum requirements which are more stringent than
29 those set forth in this section.

30 Nothing herein shall affect the employment or continuance in
31 office of any person hired as a permanent member or officer of a
32 county police department and force prior to the enactment of this
33 section.

34
35 3. This act shall take effect on the first day of the fourth month
36 next following the date of enactment.

37 38 39 STATEMENT

40
41 This bill establishes minimum age and educational requirements
42 for new applicants to be law enforcement officers in county police
43 departments and municipal law enforcement departments and
44 permits the adoption of additional education requirements.

45 This bill would require applicants to the county and municipal
46 police departments to be at least 21 years of age.

47 Under the bill, county and municipal police officers would be
48 required to have an associate degree. The degree is to be earned

1 from an institution of higher education which is licensed to award
2 academic degrees by the New Jersey Commission of Higher
3 Education, or a similar entity in another jurisdiction. The bill
4 provides exceptions to this requirement if the person has honorably
5 served in the armed services of the United States or has relevant
6 employment experience. The bill specifies that the military service
7 must have been completed within three years prior to the
8 application to the police department.

9 The bill also permits counties and municipalities to adopt more
10 stringent educational standards for initial appointment to the police
11 department.

12 Pursuant to N.J.S.40A:14-122, municipal police department
13 applicants are required to be able to read, write and speak English
14 "well and intelligently."

15 Law enforcement officers are highly paid professionals who are
16 accorded great authority and responsibility in our society. It is in
17 the public interest to increase the minimum educational
18 requirements for those seeking to enter this profession.