

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

2026 REGULAR SESSION

Introduced

House Bill 4092

By Delegates Horst, Brooks, Dean, B. Ward, Mallow,

Hillenbrand, Crouse, and Mazzocchi

[Introduced January 14, 2026; referred to the

Committee on the Judiciary]

1 A BILL to amend §30-29-5 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, relating to requiring all
 2 law-enforcement officers to have proof of citizenship of the United States as a condition of
 3 certification; and providing an exception for those persons already employed.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

ARTICLE 29. LAW-ENFORCEMENT TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION.

§30-29-5. Certification requirements and power to decertify or reinstate.

1 (a) Except as provided in subsections (b) and (e) of this section, a person may not be
 2 employed as a law-enforcement officer by any West Virginia law-enforcement agency or by any
 3 state institution of higher education or by a hospital or by the Public Service Commission of West
 4 Virginia on or after the effective date of this article unless the person has proof of citizenship of the
 5 United States, unless the person is certified, or is certifiable in the manner specified in subsection
 6 (c) of this section, by the subcommittee as having met the minimum entry level law-enforcement
 7 qualification and training program requirements promulgated pursuant to this article: *Provided,*
 8 That the provisions of this section do not apply to persons hired by the Public Service Commission
 9 as commercial vehicle enforcement officers and weight enforcement officers before July 1, 2007;
 10 *Provided, however,* That if the person is already employed as a law-enforcement officer and has
 11 otherwise met the certification requirements of this article that person may be exempt for the
 12 requirement of citizenship of the United States.

13 (b) Except as provided in subsection (e) of this section, a person who is not certified, or
 14 certifiable in the manner specified in subsection (c) of this section, may be conditionally employed
 15 as a law-enforcement officer until certified: *Provided,* That within 90 calendar days of the
 16 commencement of employment or the effective date of this article, if the person is already
 17 employed on the effective date, he or she makes a written application to attend an approved law-
 18 enforcement training academy and that the person satisfactorily completes the approved law-
 19 enforcement training academy within 18 consecutive months of the commencement of his or her
 20 employment: *Provided, however,* That the subcommittee may grant an extension, one-time only,

21 not to exceed six months, based upon a written request from the person justifying the need for
22 such an extension: *Provided further*, That the subcommittee, in its sole discretion, may grant an
23 additional extension upon demonstration of a hardship warranting it. The person's employer shall
24 provide notice, in writing, of the 90-day deadline to file a written application to the academy within
25 30 calendar days of that person's commencement of employment. The employer shall provide full
26 disclosure as to the consequences of failing to file a timely written application. The academy shall
27 notify the applicant in writing of the receipt of the application and of the tentative date of the
28 applicant's enrollment. Any applicant who, as the result of extenuating circumstances acceptable
29 to his or her employing law-enforcement official, is unable to attend the scheduled training
30 program to which he or she was admitted may reapply and shall be admitted to the next regularly
31 scheduled training program. One year after the effective date of this section, certification as a law-
32 enforcement officer within this state of persons who are not certifiable as provided in subsection
33 (c) of this section shall, in addition to graduation from an established academy in the state, be
34 based on: Current employment as a sworn law-enforcement officer by any West Virginia law-
35 enforcement agency or any state institution of higher education or the Public Service Commission;
36 and the person's successful completion of an approved entry level law-enforcement examination
37 established by legislative rule of the subcommittee, which shall include, at a minimum, written
38 testing requirements, medical standards, physical standards, and good moral character standards
39 conducted in accordance with such rule. The production of a record of successful passage of the
40 approved entry level law-enforcement examination shall indicate the applicant as qualified under
41 the law-enforcement training and certification standards within this state. An applicant who
42 satisfactorily completes the program and successfully passes the approved entry level law-
43 enforcement examination shall, within 30 days of completion, make written application to the
44 subcommittee requesting certification as having met the minimum entry level law-enforcement
45 qualification and training program requirements. Upon determining that an applicant has met the
46 requirements for certification as set forth in this section, the subcommittee shall forward to the

47 applicant documentation of certification. An applicant who fails to complete the training program to
48 which he or she is first admitted, or was admitted upon reapplication, or who fails to pass the
49 approved entry level law-enforcement examination, may not be certified by the subcommittee:
50 *And provided further,* That an applicant who has completed the minimum training and
51 examination required by the subcommittee may be certified as a law-enforcement officer,
52 notwithstanding the applicant's failure to complete additional training hours required in the training
53 program to which he or she originally applied. If more than 24 months but less than 60 months
54 have passed since the applicant for certification has successfully completed the approved entry
55 level law-enforcement examination, the person may be certified but must complete the additional
56 training set forth in legislative rules promulgated by the subcommittee addressing the
57 recertification requirements of certified officers. If more than 60 months have passed since the
58 applicant for certification has successfully completed the approved entry level law-enforcement
59 examination, the person must then attend a subcommittee-approved training program and
60 successfully complete a separate subcommittee entry level law-enforcement examination.

61 (c) Any person who begins employment on or after the effective date of this article as a law-
62 enforcement officer is certifiable as having met the minimum entry level law-enforcement training
63 program requirements and is exempt from attending a law-enforcement training academy if the
64 person has satisfactorily completed a course of instruction in law enforcement equivalent to or
65 exceeding the minimum applicable law-enforcement training curricula promulgated by the
66 subcommittee. To receive certification, the person shall make written application within 90
67 calendar days following the commencement of employment to the subcommittee requesting
68 certification. The application shall include a notarized statement of the applicant's satisfactory
69 completion of the course of instruction in law enforcement, a notarized transcript of the applicant's
70 relevant scholastic records, and a notarized copy of the curriculum of the completed course of
71 instruction. The subcommittee shall review the application and, if it finds the applicant has met the
72 requirements for certification, shall forward to the applicant documentation of certification. The

73 subcommittee may set the standards for required records to be provided by or on behalf of the
74 applicant officer to verify his or her training, status, or certification as a law-enforcement officer.
75 The subcommittee may allow an applicant officer to participate in the approved equivalent
76 certification program to gain certification as a law-enforcement officer in this state.

77 (d) Except as provided in subdivisions (1) through (3), inclusive, of this subsection, any
78 person who is employed as a law-enforcement officer on or after the effective date of this article
79 and fails to be certified shall be automatically terminated and no further emoluments shall be paid
80 to such officer by his or her employer. Any person terminated shall be entitled to reapply, as a
81 private citizen, to the subcommittee for training and certification, and upon being certified may
82 again be employed as a law-enforcement officer in this state: *Provided*, That if a person is
83 terminated under this subsection because an application was not timely filed to the academy, and
84 the person's employer failed to provide notice or disclosure to that person as set forth in
85 subsection (b) of this section, the employer shall pay the full cost of attending the academy if the
86 person's application to the subcommittee as a private citizen is subsequently approved.

87 (1) Any person who is employed as a law-enforcement officer on or after the effective date
88 of this article and fails to be certified as a result of hardship and/or circumstance beyond his or her
89 control may apply to the director of a training academy for reentry to the next available academy.

90 (2) Any person who is employed as a law-enforcement officer on or after the effective date
91 of this article and fails to be certified as a result of voluntary separation from an academy program
92 shall be automatically terminated and no further emoluments may be paid to such officer by his or
93 her employer. Any person terminated as a result of voluntary separation from an academy
94 program may not be conditionally employed as a law-enforcement officer for a period of two years
95 from the date of voluntary separation.

96 (3) Any person who is employed as a law-enforcement officer on or after the effective date
97 of this article and fails to be certified as a result of dismissal from an academy program shall be
98 automatically terminated and no further emoluments may be paid to such officer by his or her

99 employer. Any person terminated as a result of dismissal from an academy program may not be
100 conditionally employed as a law-enforcement officer for a period of five years from the date of
101 dismissal and receiving approval from the subcommittee.

102 (e) Nothing in this article may be construed as prohibiting any governing body, Civil Service
103 Commission, or chief executive of any West Virginia law-enforcement agency from requiring their
104 law-enforcement officers to meet qualifications and satisfactorily complete a course of law-
105 enforcement instruction which exceeds the minimum entry level law-enforcement qualification and
106 training curricula promulgated by the subcommittee.

107 (f) The subcommittee, or its designee, may decertify or reactivate a law-enforcement
108 officer pursuant to the procedure contained in this article and legislative rules promulgated by the
109 subcommittee.

110 (g) Any person aggrieved by a decision of the subcommittee made pursuant to this article
111 may contest the decision in accordance with the provisions of §29A-5-1 *et seq.* of this code.

112 (h) The subcommittee may issue subpoenas for the attendance of witnesses and the
113 production of necessary evidence or documents in any proceeding, review, or investigation
114 relating to certification or hearing before the subcommittee.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to require that all law-enforcement officers have proof of citizenship of the United States as a condition of certification; and providing an exception for those persons already employed

Strike-throughs indicate language that would be stricken from a heading or the present law and underscoring indicates new language that would be added.