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136th General Assembly

Bill Analysis

Version: As Introduced

Primary Sponsors: Reps. J. Miller and K. Miller

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SUMMARY

- Allows a police department to fill a vacant position in the classified civil service without a competitive examination if the department presents evidence that competition is impracticable and the position can best be filled by a person holding a specialized certification, possessing peculiar and exceptional qualifications, or having completed the department's police cadet training program.
- Allows the municipal police chief to conduct training schools for prospective law enforcement officers that align with Ohio Peace Officer Training Academy standards and offer equivalent qualification, and places the prospective officers in the unclassified civil service.

DETAILED ANALYSIS

Fill vacant police position in classified civil service without exam

Under the bill, the Director of Administrative Services may suspend the requirement to conduct a civil service examination to fill a vacant position in the classified civil service in a police department where competition is impracticable in that special case, unless the exception described below applies. To have the examination suspended, the appointing authority must submit satisfactory evidence to the Director that competition is impracticable and the position can best be filled by a person who:

- Holds a specialized certification;
- Possesses peculiar and exceptional qualifications; or
- Has completed a police cadet training program through the police department.

A suspension cannot be general in its application.¹

The Director's authority to suspend competitive examination requirements under the bill does not apply to a vacancy in a position in the classified civil service in a police department that must be filled by promotion under continuing law. Continuing law prescribes the manner by which positions above the rank of patrol officer in a police department must be filled.²

The Ohio Constitution requires that appointments to the civil service of the state or a county or city be made "according to merit and fitness, to be ascertained, as far as practicable, by competitive examinations." It also requires that laws be passed to enforce that requirement.³ Ohio law generally requires all applicants for a position in the classified civil service to pass an examination to be eligible for hire.⁴ A city must apply the Ohio civil service law unless its charter expressly allows it to exercise its power of local self-government in a way that contradicts the law.⁵

Current law allows the Director to suspend the requirement that an examination be conducted to fill a position where peculiar and exceptional qualifications of a scientific, managerial, professional, or educational character are required. To receive the suspension, the appointing authority must provide evidence that competition in each special case is impracticable and the position can best be filled by a person of high and recognized attainments relevant to the position.⁶ The Ohio Supreme Court has held that an appointing authority must demonstrate "extraordinary circumstances" to make an appointment to a position with exceptional qualifications without an examination.⁷ Determining whether extraordinary circumstances justify suspending a competitive examination requires an individualized analysis of the facts in each case.⁸

Current law also permits an appointing authority to make a temporary appointment to a vacant position in the classified civil service by noncompetitive examination. A temporary appointment must be made for urgent reasons and cannot last longer than 120 days, unless it is considered necessary according to the Director's rules.⁹ Security concerns resulting from

¹ R.C. 124.30(A)(3).

² R.C. 124.30(D), by reference to R.C. 124.44, not in the bill.

³ Ohio Constitution, Article XV, Section 10.

⁴ R.C. 124.23, not in the bill.

⁵ Ohio Const., art. XVIII, secs. 2, 3, and 7 and *State ex rel. Regetz. v. Cleveland Civ. Serv. Comm.*, 72 Ohio St.3d 167, 172 (1995). See also *Northern Ohio Patrolmen's Benevolent Assn. v. Parma*, 61 Ohio St.2d 375 (1980).

⁶ R.C. 124.30(A)(2).

⁷ *Moore v. Agin*, 12 Ohio St.3d 173, 175 (1984).

⁸ Compare *Moore* at 174-175 (finding extraordinary circumstances) with *Ohio Patrolmen's Benevolent Assn. v. Fostoria Civ. Serv. Comm.*, 2006-Ohio-4193, ¶12-14 (3rd Dist. 2006) (refusing to find extraordinary circumstances).

⁹ R.C. 124.30(A)(1).

understaffing are considered a valid “urgent reason” for making a temporary appointment.¹⁰ However, the appointing authority must administer an examination before a temporary appointment can become permanent.¹¹ A temporary appointee serves at the pleasure of the appointing authority. If the temporary appointee is permanently appointed to the position, the temporary service does not count toward the appointee’s probationary service in the permanent position.¹²

Training schools for prospective law enforcement officers

The bill allows a municipal police chief to conduct training schools for prospective law enforcement officers. The training school programs must align with Ohio Peace Officer Training Academy standards and cadet qualifications. The prospective officers, during the training period and as members of the training school, may be paid a reasonable salary. The bill places prospective officers participating in a training school program in the unclassified civil service. The police chief may establish rules governing the qualifications for admission to training schools for prospective officers and provide for competitive examinations to determine the fitness of the students and prospective officers, not inconsistent with the Director’s rules. The police chief also may furnish the necessary supplies and equipment for the prospective officers’ use during the training. On completing a training school program, a program graduate may be hired directly by the relevant department provided that the graduate also satisfies the requirements for original appointment as a peace officer under continuing law. These requirements include receiving a certificate from the Executive Director of the Ohio Peace Officer Training Commission attesting to the graduate’s completion of an approved basic training program and completion of a background check.¹³

HISTORY

| Action | Date |
|------------|----------|
| Introduced | 02-03-25 |

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¹⁰ *State ex rel. Charlton v. McFaul*, 8th Dist. Cuyahoga No. 68678, 1995 Ohio App. LEXIS 5284, 1995 WL 705266 (November 30, 1995).

¹¹ *See, e.g., Mines v. Warren*, 11th Dist. Trumbull Case Nos. 90-T-4453, 90-T-4454, 1991 Ohio App. LEXIS 1838, 1991 WL 70115 (April 26, 1991).

¹² R.C. 124.30(B) and (C), with conforming changes in R.C. 124.11.

¹³ R.C. 124.11(A) and 737.061, by reference to R.C. 109.77, not in the bill.