

2021 -- H 5145

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2021

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A N A C T

RELATING TO STATE AFFAIRS AND GOVERNMENT - POLICE OFFICERS -
COMMISSION ON STANDARDS AND TRAINING

Introduced By: Representative David A. Bennett

Date Introduced: January 25, 2021

Referred To: House Judiciary

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 42-28.2-8.3 of the General Laws in Chapter 42-28.2 entitled "Police
2 Officers - Commission on Standards and Training" is hereby amended to read as follows:

3 ~~42-28.2-8.3. Educational requirements -- National certified mental health first aid~~
4 ~~training.~~ **42-28.2-8.3. Educational requirements – Training on calls involving individuals with behavioral**
5 **health, substance use disorder, cognitive or communication-related disabilities.**

6 (a) The commission on standards and training shall prepare and publish mandatory training
7 standards to provide instructions for police officers in identifying and handling of complaints
8 involving mental health/substance abuse emergencies, and victims, witnesses, or suspects with
9 mental illness or substance use disorders and shall develop guidelines for law enforcement
10 responses to incidents involving such persons. The course of instruction shall comply with the
11 certified National Council of Behavioral Health Mental Health First Aid Program (MHFA) for law
12 enforcement. Instruction and the guidelines shall include:

13 (1) Identifying and recognizing mental illness or substance use disorders for the benefit of
14 victims and witnesses, the availability of civil remedies and community resources for persons
15 experiencing mental health emergencies, and the protection of persons with mental illness or
16 substance use disorders and for law enforcement officers engaging such persons;

17 (2) Providing information to law enforcement officers to recognize the signs and symptoms
18 of common mental illnesses and substance use disorders, de-escalating crisis situations safely, and

1 initiating timely referral to mental health and substance abuse resources available in the
2 community.

3 (b) The commission on standards and training shall prepare and publish mandatory training
4 standards to provide instructions for police officers in identifying and handling of complaints
5 involving victims, witnesses, or suspects with cognitive or communication-related disabilities and
6 shall develop guidelines for law enforcement responses to incidents involving such persons.
7 Instruction and guidelines shall include:

8 (1) Identifying and recognizing cognitive and communication-related disabilities for the
9 benefit of victims and witnesses, the availability of community resources for persons experiencing
10 emergencies, and the protection of persons with cognitive and communication-related disabilities
11 and for law enforcement officers engaging such persons; and

12 (2) Providing information to law enforcement officers to recognize the signs and symptoms
13 of common cognitive and communication-related disabilities, de-escalating crisis situations safely,
14 and initiating timely referral to resources available in the community.

15 ~~(b)(c)~~ The commission shall include training in all curricula for recruits and in-service
16 trainees, in all police academies operating or certified by the commission. All law enforcement
17 trainees shall be certified by the National Council of Behavioral Health in Mental Health First Aid.

18 ~~(e)(d)~~ All law enforcement trainees shall participate in the course of basic training for law
19 enforcement officers, established in this section, as part of their required certification process.

20 ~~(d)(e)~~ Training presenters shall include behavioral health, developmental disabilities and
21 communication disabilities practitioners with expertise in the delivery of direct services to
22 individuals experiencing mental health or substance abuse emergencies and victims, witnesses, and
23 suspects with mental illness, cognitive disabilities, communication-related disabilities and
24 consumer-survivors i.e. individuals with mental illness, cognitive disabilities, communication-
25 related disabilities or substance use disorders. Training presentations may utilize the staff of
26 community-based ~~mental health~~ treatment facilities.

27 ~~(e)(f)~~ The course of instruction, the learning and performance objectives, the standards for
28 training, and the guidelines shall be developed by the municipal police training committee in
29 consultation with groups and individuals having an interest and expertise in the field of mental
30 health, cognitive disabilities, communication-related disabilities and community-based treatment.

31 ~~(f)(g)~~ The municipal police training committee periodically shall include within its in-
32 service training curriculum a course of instruction on handling complaints from or against persons
33 with mental illness, cognitive disabilities, communication-related disabilities or substance use
34 disorders, consistent with the provisions of subsections (a)(1), ~~and~~ (a)(2), (b)(1) and (b)(2) of this

1 section.

2 (h) The commission on standards and training shall prepare and publish mandatory training
3 standards to provide instruction for police detectives in investigating and handling complaints
4 involving victims, witnesses or suspects with cognitive or communication-related disabilities and
5 shall develop guidelines for detectives responding to incidents involving such persons.

6 (i) The commission on standards and training shall include and require training in the
7 curricula described in subsection (h) of this section for all newly commissioned police detectives
8 and in-service trainees, in all police academies operated or certified by the commission.

9 ~~(e)~~(j) As used in this section, the following words and terms shall have the following
10 meanings:

11 (1) "Law enforcement officer" shall mean any officer of a municipal police department or
12 a department of the state.

13 (2) "Consumer-survivor" shall mean any individual suffering from mental health disability,
14 cognitive disabilities, communication-related disabilities or substance abuse disorder.

15 (3) "Police detective" means any detective of a municipal police department or a
16 department in the state.

17 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF

A N A C T

RELATING TO STATE AFFAIRS AND GOVERNMENT - POLICE OFFICERS -
COMMISSION ON STANDARDS AND TRAINING

1 This act would require the commission on standards and training to provide training and
2 instructions for police officers and trainees in order to more accurately identify complaints
3 involving persons with cognitive or communication-related disabilities and to develop law
4 enforcement responses to such emergencies, including training for police detectives investigating
5 such complaints.

6 This act would take effect upon passage.

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