



Attorney General

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KEEPING PEOPLE SAFE



Law Enforcement Recruitment and Retention

The problem:

Law enforcement agencies are struggling to staff their departments, putting public safety and trust in law enforcement at risk.

- 506 fewer recruits took the Basic Law Enforcement Training exam last year than in 2019.
- Law enforcement retirement increased by 45 percent and resignation increased by 18 percent in 2021, according to a national survey.
- There were 492 more law enforcement separations than new appointments in North Carolina between 2020 and 2021.

North Carolina needs a strategy to better recruit and retain public-spirited officers who keep our communities safe. Well-staffed, well-trained, diverse law enforcement agencies make us safer.

Recruitment Strategies Include:

Expand the Criminal Justice Fellows Program: CJ Fellows repays community college loans for people who work four years in a North Carolina law enforcement job. HB 612 (Reps. Smith, Faircloth & Greene) would expand the program to all 100 NC counties and would give students extra time to finish their degree.

Offer Law Enforcement Hiring Bonuses: NC should encourage hiring military veteran and out-of-state officers. NC BLET graduates should be offered \$5,000 bonus, out-of-state transfers and former military police should be offered a \$10,000 bonus and \$10,000 relocation stipend.

Launch a Public Awareness and Out-of-State Recruiting Campaign: We should launch an advertising campaign to recruit officers from other states and territories.

Retention Strategies Include:

Stop Pension Penalty: SB 113, the Bring Back Our Heroes Act (Sens. Britt, Perry, and Newton) would allow retired officers to come back to work without impacting their retirement pay.

Incentivize Further Education: NC should provide bonuses for officers who get additional education or training, up to a bachelor's degree.

Offer Mental Health and Wellness Resources: North Carolina should offer specific, tailored mental health and wellness resources for officers to address the unique and difficult challenges they face in keeping our communities safe.