SB 153-FN-A - AS AMENDED BY THE SENATE

03/16/2023 0988s

2023 SESSION

23-0833
04/05

SENATE BILL ***153-FN-A***

AN ACT establishing a law enforcement officers, professional firefighters, and emergency medical technicians career development, recruitment, and retention program and making an appropriation therefor.

SPONSORS: Sen. Watters, Dist 4; Sen. D'Allesandro, Dist 20; Sen. Fenton, Dist 10; Sen. Perkins Kwoka, Dist 21; Sen. Rosenwald, Dist 13; Sen. Birdsell, Dist 19; Sen. Chandley, Dist 11; Sen. Carson, Dist 14; Sen. Abbas, Dist 22; Sen. Ricciardi, Dist 9; Sen. Soucy, Dist 18; Sen. Whitley, Dist 15; Sen. Prentiss, Dist 5; Rep. Ladd, Graf. 5; Rep. Soucy, Merr. 21; Rep. Roy, Rock. 31; Rep. Harriott-Gathright, Hills. 10

COMMITTEE: Education

ANALYSIS

This bill establishes a first responder career development, recruitment, and retention program in the community college system, and makes an appropriation for the program.

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Explanation: Matter added to current law appears in ***bold italics.***
Matter removed from current law appears [~~in brackets and struckthrough.~~]
Matter which is either (a) all new or (b) repealed and reenacted appears in regular type.

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

In the Year of Our Lord Two Thousand Twenty Three

AN ACT establishing a law enforcement officers, professional firefighters, and emergency medical technicians career development, recruitment, and retention program and making an appropriation therefor.

Be it Enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court convened:

1 Findings. The general court finds that New Hampshire law enforcement officers, professional firefighters, and emergency medical technicians are dedicated professionals whose careers should be supported through educational opportunities. Career development is essential for enhancing public safety, and the state of New Hampshire should provide educational support to law enforcement officers, professional firefighters, and emergency medical technicians. Due to changes in technology, challenges arising from the opioid crisis, mental health impacts, and the increased complexity of practices, management, and interactions with the public, New Hampshire needs to ensure law enforcement officers, professional firefighters, and emergency medical technicians can gain necessary skills through degree programs. Recruitment and retention in the workforce are essential as municipalities face retirements, changing demographics, and increasing competition for highly trained professionals. It is also a public good to encourage New Hampshire graduates to pursue careers as police officers and firefighters and to commit to careers in the state.

2 New Subdivision; Law Enforcement Officers, Professional Firefighters, and Emergency Medical Technicians Career Development, Recruitment, and Retention Program. Amend RSA 188-F by inserting after section 69 the following new subdivision:

Law Enforcement Officers, Professional Firefighters, and Emergency Medical Technicians Career Development, Recruitment, and Retention Program

188-F:70 Program Established.

I. There is hereby established in the community college system of New Hampshire the New Hampshire law enforcement officers, professional firefighters, and emergency medical technicians career development, recruitment, and retention program. To the extent of available funds, New Hampshire law enforcement officers, professional firefighters, and emergency medical technicians may receive reimbursement, upon successful completion, for the cost of one course per semester, including required fees, in a degree program at an institution in the community college system as approved for that individual upon recommendation of the person's supervisor and the committee. Such courses may be in any field leading to a degree in an area of study approved by the commission.

II. Upon employment by a New Hampshire fire service, a graduate of the New Hampshire fire academy, or the entity that paid for the cost, with the recommendation of the employee's

supervisor and the approval of the committee, shall receive full reimbursement for the cost of the academy not covered by other funding sources.

188-F:71 Law Enforcement Officers, Professional Firefighters, and Emergency Medical Technicians Career Development, Recruitment, and Retention Program Committee Established.

I. There is hereby established the law enforcement officers, professional firefighters, and emergency medical technicians career development, recruitment, and retention program committee. The member of the committee shall be as follows:

(a) The commissioner of the New Hampshire department of safety, or designee. The commissioner, or designee, shall serve as chairperson of the committee.

(b) The chancellor of the community college system of New Hampshire, or designee.

(c) The director of the New Hampshire police standards and training council, or designee.

(d) The director of the New Hampshire Fire Academy, or designee.

(e) The president of the New Hampshire Association of Chiefs of Police, or designee.

(f) The president of the New Hampshire Police Association, or designee.

(g) The president of the New Hampshire state police union, or designee.

(h) The president of the Professional Firefighters of New Hampshire, or designee.

(i) The president of the New Hampshire Association of Emergency Medical Technicians, or designee.

(j) The president of the New Hampshire Association of Fire Chiefs, or designee.

(k) Three educators from the community college system of New Hampshire, appointed by the chancellor of the community college system of New Hampshire.

II. The committee shall establish criteria and procedures for approval of requests for course reimbursement, allocation of available funds, and student debt payment.

III. The community college system shall determine the number of credits and the course equivalents granted for graduation from the New Hampshire police standards and training council and the New Hampshire fire academy.

IV. The committee shall report annually to the governor, president of the senate, and speaker of the house of representatives. The report shall include information regarding participation in the program, completion of courses, student debt relief, fire academy tuition reimbursement, and data and other information relative to recruitment and retention, and shall make recommendations for legislation relative to the program, and resources needed to achieve its goals.

188-F:72 Law Enforcement Officers, Professional Firefighters, and Emergency Medical Technicians Career Development, Recruitment, and Retention Fund Established. There is hereby established in the state treasury a fund to be known as the law enforcement officers, professional firefighters, and emergency medical technicians career development, recruitment, and retention

fund. The fund shall be administered by the community college system of New Hampshire. The fund shall be nonlapsing and continually appropriated to the community college system to support the program established in this subdivision. The community college system shall establish procedures for receiving and disbursing funds, and it shall report to the committee established in RSA 188-F:71 on the operation of the fund. The fund may accept state or federal appropriations or grants, or gifts, grants, or donations from any other source.

3 Community College System of New Hampshire; Appropriation. There is hereby appropriated to the community college system of New Hampshire the sum of $2,000,000 for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024. This sum shall be in addition to any other sums appropriated to the community college system. Funds shall be used to support the law enforcement officers, professional firefighters, and emergency medical technicians career development, recruitment, and retention program established in RSA 188-F:70. Of the sum appropriated, up to $1,750,000 shall be used for course reimbursement under the program and up to $250,000 shall be used for New Hampshire fire academy cost reimbursement. The governor is authorized to draw a warrant for said sum out of any money in the treasury not otherwise appropriated.

4 Effective Date.

I. Section 3 of this act shall take effect July 1, 2023.

II. The remainder of this act shall take effect upon its passage.

LBA
23-0833
Amended 4/14/23

SB 153-FN-A- FISCAL NOTE

AS AMENDED BY THE SENATE (AMENDMENT #2023-0988s)

AN ACT establishing a law enforcement officers, professional firefighters, and emergency medical technicians career development, recruitment, and retention program and making an appropriation therefor.

FISCAL IMPACT: [X] State [ ] County [ ] Local [ ] None

	Estimated Increase / (Decrease)			
STATE:	**FY 2023**	**FY 2024**	**FY 2025**	**FY 2026**
Appropriation	$0	$2,000,000	$0	$0
Revenue	$0	$0	$0	$0
Expenditures	$0	No More Than $2,000,000		
Funding Source:	[X] General	[ ] Education	[ ] Highway	[ ] Other

METHODOLOGY:

This bill creates a New Hampshire law enforcement officers, professional firefighters, and emergency medical technicians career development, recruitment, and retention program, to be administered by the Community College System of New Hampshire, to provide reimbursement to eligible individuals for tuition and fees for courses taken at a NH community college and for reimbursement of NH Fire Academy courses, to the extent funds are available. This bill creates a dedicated funds for the program and appropriates $2,000,000 in general funds in FY 2024, of which up to $1,750,000 would be used for course reimbursement and up to $250,000 would be used for NH Fire Academy reimbursement. The System assumes it could use some portion of the appropriation to administer the new program, however, does not have specific costs identified at this time. It is unknown at this time how much of the $2,000,000 appropriation will be spent in each fiscal year.

AGENCIES CONTACTED:

Community College System of New Hampshire