



MINUTES

Iowa Law Enforcement Academy Interim Study Committee

Wednesday, November 8, 2023

MEMBERS PRESENT

Senator Brad Zaun, Co-chairperson
Senator Nate Boulton
Senator Izaah Knox
Senator Charlie McClintock
Senator Cherielynn Westrich

Representative Steven Holt, Co-chairperson
Representative Sean Bagniewski
Representative Eric J. Gjerde
Representative Joshua Meggers
Representative Mike Vondran

Ex Officio members:

Laura Book
Sheriff Andy Brown
Brady Carney, ILEA Director
Lt. Michael Girsch
Meggan Guns
Susan Krisko

Ricardo Martinez II, ILEA Council Chair
Chief Dennis McDaniel
Major Adam Schaefer
Sheriff Jim Steinkuehler
Lt. Matt Struecker

LSA CONTACTS: Organizational staffing provided by: Adrienne Seusy, Legal Counsel, 515.281.3444; Minutes prepared by: Joe Simpson, Legal Counsel, 515.725.2251

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I. Procedural Business

Call to Order and Adjournment. The meeting of the Iowa Law Enforcement Academy (ILEA) Interim Study Committee was called to order by temporary Co-chairperson Holt at 10:00 a.m., November 8, 2023, in Room 103 of the State Capitol, Des Moines. The meeting was adjourned at 12:20 p.m.

Election of Permanent Co-chairpersons. Members of the committee unanimously elected temporary Co-chairpersons Zaun and Holt as permanent Co-chairpersons.

Adoption of Rules. Members of the committee adopted procedural rules that are available on the committee's website.

Committee Charge. The charge of the committee was, in accordance with House File 562 (2023 Iowa Acts, chapter 113, section 29), to review and evaluate ILEA entrance requirements, courses of study, attendance requirements, equipment requirements, equipment and facility sufficiency, training requirements, and fitness standards, and consider additional locations for law enforcement training schools and current and future facility needs.

Opening Remarks. Mr. Brady Carney, Director, ILEA, described his background and explained the conditions that led to problems with the ILEA's processes and products. Director Carney also discussed the role of the ILEA relating to minimum hiring requirements and standardization of training.

II. Committee Discussion

Co-chairperson Holt opened the general discussion by reviewing concerns addressed in the ILEA Supplemental Information document shared with members prior to the meeting. In addition to challenges caused by insufficient funding, Director Carney noted that training requirements leave little room for flexibility of training schedules, especially because schedules are often created six months to a year in advance due to renting off-site facilities and securing guest instructors. Director Carney also expressed the desire for more centralization and oversight over the regional training academies and law enforcement agencies to ensure training meets the ILEA's standards and that peace officers are qualified.

When asked whether the ILEA has determined its priorities, Director Carney noted the immediate challenges of scheduling, updating the curriculum, and keeping staff properly trained are already being addressed. As for long-term goals, Director Carney stated that additional funding is needed to maintain the training facility and update it. The ILEA has not increased tuition but it has increased fees, though at an amount that covers less than what is needed for maintenance. Director Carney said that additional funding could allow the ILEA to reduce the tuition burden on smaller law enforcement agencies, struggling with tighter budgets and new officer retention.

Multiple committee members had questions regarding training at the regional academies located at community colleges. In response to questions about whether training was more lenient at the regional academies, Director Carney stated that the ILEA does not have full-time representatives at the regional academies to oversee operations but reiterated the desire to increase standardization and training for staff. Director Carney also noted insufficient training was less likely to occur at the academies operated by the Des Moines Police Department, the Department of Public Safety, and the Cedar Rapids Police Department because each of those agencies predominantly train their own officers.

When asked about the ILEA's role for professional development and maintenance of certification for officers, Director Carney stated the ILEA is not always aware of certification issues because most



certification oversight is the responsibility of individual law enforcement agencies. Director Carney wants to centralize certification information so the ILEA could scrutinize documents submitted by law enforcement agencies. Centralization of information would also allow the ILEA to identify law enforcement agencies in need of assistance in terms of paying tuition for new officers.

In response to questions regarding the similarity of experiences at each regional academy, Director Carney stated that standardization is important because an officer who becomes certified is eligible to be a peace officer anywhere in the state. If any differences exist between regional academies, that was due to the ILEA's failure to update its standards. Director noted that standards will be updated every year by November 1. Director Carney also stated that regular training will be provided to instructional staff, which will allow the instructional staff to communicate the importance of specific training modules with new hires.

When asked why the ILEA should have more oversight over partner law enforcement agencies, but not an auditing role, Director Carney said that he wants the ILEA to partner with law enforcement agencies rather than be viewed as a problem-seeking entity meant to hand out punishments. Mr. Dennis McDaniel, Chief of Police, Johnston Police Department, stated that the law enforcement community wants the best training for its officers to ensure strong community support. Chief McDaniel supports funding for additional ILEA staff and raising minimum standards and expectations.

When asked about ensuring that officers who have been decertified are not rehired by law enforcement agencies, Director Carney stated that the ILEA's staff works on investigations in a timely manner, but those investigations used to take up to 10 years. Director Carney was not sure how many decertified officers attempted to be rehired, but noted that the ILEA conducted about 100 investigations this year.

In response to questions about adhering to legislation and administrative rules, Director Carney stated that the Iowa Code is not restrictive or robust, but there are some issues with terminology that could be addressed. Adding more direction to the Code could take away the ILEA's flexibility and be subject to political whims. Director Carney mentioned that the bigger issue is updating the ILEA's administrative rules, which include conflicting information. In regard to pending legislation or court rulings, the ILEA needs to quickly ensure adherence to the law.

In response to a question about whether law enforcement agencies in small communities overlook issues due to cost restraints, Director Carney confirmed that does happen, particularly when a law enforcement agency has to wait months to send a new officer to the ILEA. Law enforcement agencies in small communities are also more likely to take on the risk of hiring an officer who has left another agency for disciplinary reasons, even if the discipline did not lead to decertification.

Ms. Meggan Guns, Assistant County Attorney, Polk County Attorney's Office, mentioned that county attorney offices play a role in notifying law enforcement agencies about recent court decisions and other changes to the law, but smaller county attorney offices might struggle to make sure that the law enforcement agencies in their respective jurisdictions are updated. Director Carney mentioned that the ILEA works with the Iowa County Attorneys Association to determine the parameters of dishonest conduct.

Mr. Ricardo Martinez II, Chief of Police, Nevada Police Department, discussed the ILEA Council's hearing process and steps taken when decertification is recommended. Chief Martinez stated that discipline is a necessary part of the police community because compromising with bad behavior puts citizens at risk.



In response to a question about the citizenship requirement to become a peace officer, Director Carney said that any changes to the requirement would have to come from a level higher than the ILEA. Chief Martinez recalled only ever working with two potential new officer hires to seek a waiver of the requirement.

In response to a question about whether Iowa could have more regional academies, Director Carney stated that the administrative rules governing the ILEA are extensive and would hinder any rapid establishment of new regional academies.

Co-chairperson Holt solicited potential recommendations to be included in the committee's final report. Co-chairperson Holt mentioned evaluating centralization and support for the ILEA to train officers on changes in the law, including from court rulings, and evaluating funding necessary to address shortfalls identified in the ILEA Supplemental Information document. Senator Boulton suggested including the role of county attorneys in presenting information to local law enforcement agencies. Lieutenant Matt Struecker, Department of Public Safety, suggested including the ability of the ILEA and regional academies to control their own facilities as a recommendation for the final report.

III. Materials Filed With the Legislative Services Agency

The following materials listed were distributed at or in connection with the meeting and are filed with the Legislative Services Agency. The materials may be accessed from the "Committee Documents" link on the committee's Internet site: www.legis.iowa.gov/committees/meetings/documents?committee=39588&ga=ALL

1. ILEA Supplemental Information
2. SF 562, section 29