



THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
GOVERNOR BILL WALKER

Department of Public Safety

ALASKA POLICE STANDARDS COUNCIL

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January 31, 2018

The Honorable Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins
Chair, House State Affairs Committee
State Capitol Room 411
Juneau AK, 99801

RE: House Bill 293 Background Checks for Police & Training – Committee Questions

Dear Representative Kreiss-Tomkins,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before the House State Affairs Committee yesterday regarding HB 293. During my presentation, the committee asked for additional information on several matters: 1) the number of police officers in Alaska and any trends in the number of police officers over time; 2) how many village police officers are there in Alaska; and 3) could a statutory change empower a municipality with the authority to send fingerprints directly to the Department of Public Safety for a Criminal History Background check.

I have enclosed a chart and associated graph demonstrating the number of police officers working for each Alaska police department on July 1st of each year, from 2013 through 2017. This is based on the records maintained by APSC and is subject to the reporting of each agency. Our numbers may differ slightly from those provided by our member agencies, due to the timeliness of their reporting employment actions to us.

It is notable that, while the number of Alaska State Troopers declined by about 45 officers from 2013 to 2017, the Anchorage Police Department added about 74 officers during the same period. This contributed to a statewide net increase of 32 officers. If the Anchorage Police Department were removed from the chart we would see that the statewide number of police officers outside Anchorage dropped by 42 officers in the five-year period.

APSC currently has official records of eleven village police officers in seven different rural communities. We know that there are over 123 other incorporated rural Alaskan communities who are eligible to hire village police officers. Unfortunately, we do not know how many of them may have already done so and simply failed to report it to the council.

It would not require a statutory change to allow municipalities to submit fingerprints to the Department of Public Safety. Incorporated municipalities currently have the authority to conduct their own fingerprint based background checks provided that:

1) They agree to abide by AS 12.62 and AS 12.64, the National Crime Prevention and Privacy Compact, if they wish to conduct fingerprint based background checks on potential employees.

2) Assuming that they agree to abide by those laws, every municipality will need to develop an infrastructure to ensure compliance with the appropriate security policies and regulations pertaining the receipt, storage and dissemination of criminal justice information. This can be quite complex, particularly so if they wish to store any data electronically. Even if they decide to store the information provided on paper, they must ensure that only authorized recipients are allowed to view this information.

3) In order to obtain criminal justice information from the repository (Records and Identification [R&I] and the national Interstate Identification Index system or III) DPS/R&I will need to enter into a User Agreement with the municipality. Once that agreement is in place, DPS/R&I is required by state law and national policy to audit each municipality biannually. This, of course, will cost both the municipality and the Department of Public Safety significant amounts of money. Misuse of the information can result in civil and criminal liability to the entities receiving the information.

As I described in my testimony, the FBI has determined that the Alaska Police Standards Council (APSC) is a regulatory/licensing entity, and is not considered to be conducting 'criminal justice activity'. Therefore, the APSC must be authorized by statute to request that these background checks are completed for those potential officers from municipalities without established agreements in place, as described above.

HB 293 will allow the APSC to request state and national fingerprint based background checks on behalf of municipalities who do not have the means to establish the infrastructure required to directly request these checks from DPS/R&I. APSC's background checks will be completed in a manner similar to any other licensing entity such as the Department of Education, the Alaska Bar, or the Division of Insurance.

Respectfully,

R.E. 'Bob' Griffiths
Executive Director

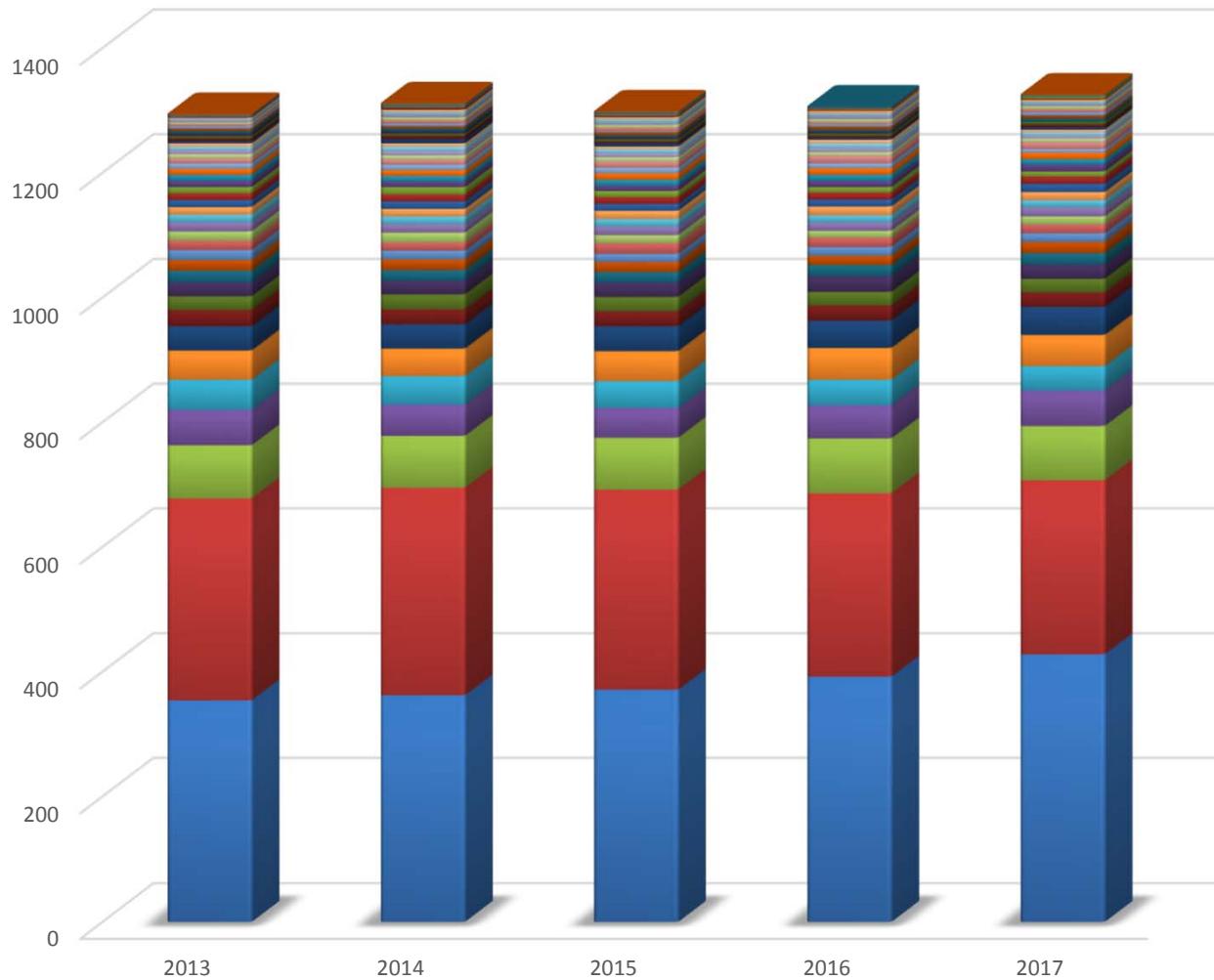
Attachment: APSC Officer Count

This is a snapshot of the number of officers at each department on July 1 of each year.

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Anchorage Police Department	354	362	371	392	428
Alaska State Troopers	324	333	321	294	279
Alaska Wildlife Troopers	85	83	83	88	87
Anchorage Airport Police/Fire	57	50	48	53	57
Fairbanks Police Department	48	46	43	41	39
Juneau Police Department	47	44	48	51	50
North Slope Borough PD	39	39	40	44	45
Ketchikan Police Department	26	24	24	24	23
Fairbanks Airport Police/Fire	22	24	23	22	22
Wasilla Police Department	22	22	23	25	23
Kenai Police Department	19	17	17	18	18
Kodiak Police Department	17	17	16	15	18
Palmer Police Department	16	14	13	14	14
Sitka Police Department	15	13	17	15	14
University of Alaska/Anchorage	15	16	13	11	13
North Pole Police Department	14	13	13	13	14
Unalaska DPS	13	13	13	12	12
Soldotna Police Department	12	12	13	14	13
Homer Police Department	11	12	11	11	13
Valdez Police Department	11	11	11	11	12
Bethel Police Department	10	12	10	9	8
Petersburg Police Department	10	9	8	10	11
Seward Police Department	10	9	10	10	9
Nome Police Department	9	9	10	10	10
University of Alaska/Fairbanks	9	9	9	8	6
Kotzebue Police Department	8	8	10	12	11
Wrangell Police Department	7	7	7	6	6
Cordova Police Department	6	6	6	6	4
Dillingham DPS	6	8	7	8	6
Metlakatla Police Department	5	5	4	6	4
Fire, Life, and Safety	4	7	5	3	4
Haines Police Department	4	5	3	3	4
King Cove Police Department	4	4	4	4	5
Saint Paul Police Department	4	4	3	3	
Sand Point Police Department	4	4	3	3	5
Skagway Police Department	4	4	5	5	5
Whittier Police Department	4	4	2	4	5
Bristol Bay Borough PD	3	5	5	3	5
Craig Police Department	3	5	5	5	5
Yakutat Police Department	3	4	3	5	3
Hoonah Police Department	2	4	5	4	4
Klawock Police Department	2	4	4	4	3
Adak	1	1	1		
Chickaloon	1	3	2	2	2
Fort Yukon Police Department	1	2	2	2	3
Galena Police Department	1	1	1	2	
Ketchikan Airport Police	1	2	2	1	2
Seldovia Police Department	1	1	1		1
Cops on Call					1
Total	1294	1311	1298	1306	1326

Tracking only

Alaska Police Officers Per Agency as of July 1



■ Anchorage Police Department	■ Alaska State Troopers	■ Alaska Wildlife Troopers
■ Anchorage Airport Police/Fire	■ Fairbanks Police Department	■ Juneau Police Department
■ North Slope Borough PD	■ Ketchikan Police Department	■ Fairbanks Airport Police/Fire
■ Wasilla Police Department	■ Kenai Police Department	■ Kodiak Police Department
■ Palmer Police Department	■ Sitka Police Department	■ University of Alaska/Anchorage
■ North Pole Police Department	■ Unalaska DPS	■ Soldotna Police Department
■ Homer Police Department	■ Valdez Police Department	■ Bethel Police Department
■ Petersburg Police Department	■ Seward Police Department	■ Nome Police Department
■ University of Alaska/Fairbanks	■ Kotzebue Police Department	■ Wrangell Police Department
■ Cordova Police Department	■ Dillingham DPS	■ Metlakatla Police Department
■ Fire, Life, and Safety	■ Haines Police Department	■ King Cove Police Department
■ Saint Paul Police Department	■ Sand Point Police Department	■ Skagway Police Department
■ Whittier Police Department	■ Bristol Bay Borough PD	■ Craig Police Department
■ Yakutat Police Department	■ Hoonah Police Department	■ Klawock Police Department
■ Adak	■ Chickaloon	■ Fort Yukon Police Department
■ Galena Police Department	■ Ketchikan Airport Police	■ Seldovia Police Department