

Dear Rep. Lynn:

My name is Aaron Danielson and I am an investigator with the Fairbanks Airport Police & Fire Department. I am also the Public Safety Employee Association Vice-President and legislative committee chair. I am writing in support of HB 351, as I think that is very important to protect my police certificate, my occupation as a police officer, and myself. I can't imagine doing any other kind of work than the public service and protection from my police and fire position.

HB 351 provides the necessary procedural protections by requiring the Alaska Police Standards Council to hold hearing when determining the status of a police certificate and requiring that the Council use a clear and convincing evidence standard to support its status decision on a certificate. This isn't a standard of 'without any doubt' but is greater than having that general feeling that the accusation may be true. By earlier testimony by the APSC, this is a standard that they generally already use in practice, though not writing. Additionally, Council should follow along the decisions made by the court system and arbitrators. I am not about keeping bad cops on the street as it endangers the public and tarnishes the police forces reputation, which only makes our jobs harder. But when an Alaska court finds that an officer was unjustly terminated from their job, there should not be a 'back door' firing by the revoking of that officer's police certificate.

I also support those law enforcement officers protecting our courthouses to be certified as police officers. I myself am employed as an Airport Police & Fire Officer. My job class went through the same fight to receive certification and training in the early 90's as the Court Service Officers are going through now. That certification will allow CSO's to receive adequate training for the job they are performing as well as reducing the risk of liability to the state of Alaska. CSO's often operate outside the court house, transporting criminals and interacting with the public during these travels. Any citizen seeing a CSO would assume that they are a peace officer and expect them to be able to act as such.

The certification isn't a ploy to gain higher wages either. APFO's hold the same certification as an Alaska State Troopers, and a number of additional fire and medical certifications, yet we are paid less than a Trooper. CSO's gaining a police certification will not create a like work, like pay lawsuit. You can hold the same police certification, but be doing separate job duties and receive separate pay.

I support the protection of my identity and would not want my agency to disclose to anyone asking for my picture or for my home address, unless I consented. In this day and age, it is very important to protect my family and me from those to seek to harm us. It is easy enough for someone with Google to find some of these details already, our own police departments shouldn't be helping them out. Some police chiefs have stated this wouldn't allow them to release photos for PR purposes or 'good feeling' stories and events. This would not limit photos taken by reporters or the public. It would only limit those photos that the department would take, typically being our employment photos (a close up head shot). There isn't any other way to be better identified while we are off duty, out of uniform, and with our families than giving out a close up head shot to those that wish to do us harm.

Lastly, I support this legislation, which allows a police officer to refuse to take a polygraph test and not have that refusal used against him or her. This is already recognized by the state of Alaska in our PSEA contract, but isn't for a vast majority of the other police departments in the state. There are more effective methods at obtaining the truth.

I urge you support this important bill that protects the rights of all police officers throughout the State. I would like to thank Rep. Hawker for sponsoring this bill and recognizing the importance of certifying CSO's, shielding good officers from 'back door' firings, and protecting our privacy from those that wish to do us harm.



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