



SENATE MAJORITY OFFICE

Oregon State Legislature
State Capitol
Salem, OR

NEWS RELEASE

February 20, 2020

CONTACT: Amanda Kraus, 503-986-1074

Amanda.Kraus@oregonlegislature.gov

Oregon Senate Approves Legislation to Improve Law Enforcement Accountability

SALEM – Today, the Oregon Senate unanimously approved Senate Bill 1567. This bill will provide clear and consistent expectations for law enforcement officers around the consequences of misconduct, ensuring accountability for officers and improving public trust.

Law enforcement officers are public employees currently governed by the Public Employee Collective Bargaining Act (PECBA) which allows bargaining units and employees to agree to specific procedures to address a complaint or grievance, which often includes arbitration.

Currently, if a police officer has been found to have committed misconduct, the department will make its discipline decision and the officer may then appeal that decision and go to binding arbitration. If the arbitrator determines a lesser discipline than the department, it overturns the department's decision. This inconsistency presents legal challenges and confusion. SB 1567 addresses the incongruity between these processes by requiring the disciplinary action taken by an arbitrator to remain consistent with that of the agency if the police department and union have agreed to a discipline guide or matrix in the collective bargaining process and they have also found that an officer engaged in misconduct.

“This bill, simply, is about police accountability. It is about ensuring a level of confidence in our law enforcement, both from the public and within the agencies themselves,” said Senator Lew Frederick (D – Northeast Portland). “Improving public trust in law enforcement is critical. When officers are not held accountable due to an inconsistent process, we directly work against building that trust.”

Senate Bill 1567 requires a law enforcement agency to make the creation of a discipline matrix or guide a subject of collective bargaining, which would ensure the ramifications for misconduct are clear, consistent, and transparent.

“This bill solves a historical problem and supports a fair, legal and supportive structure for the management of employee discipline,” said Frederick.

The bill now moves to the House of Representatives for consideration.

###