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## **OLR Bill Analysis**

**sSB 120 (File 275, as amended by Senate "A")\***

### ***AN ACT ALLOWING POLICE OFFICERS TO WEAR RELIGIOUS HEAD COVERINGS AS PART OF A POLICE UNIFORM.***

#### **SUMMARY**

This bill requires each law enforcement unit, by October 1, 2021, to adopt or amend a policy to allow their police officers to wear religious head coverings that correspond to their religious beliefs while on duty and wearing a uniform or other authorized attire, except where the units require their officers to use tight-fitting protective headgear.

Additionally, the bill requires the Police Officer Standards and Training Council (POST) to develop, by January 1, 2022, a model policy on the use of social media by law enforcement units and police officers while they are on duty. The policy must include at least the following:

1. guidelines on using a unit's social media account,
2. the responsibilities of any unit employee who manages and approves content to post on a unit's account,
3. procedures for when the unauthorized use of a unit's account is detected,
4. guidelines to ensure compliance with applicable state or federal law,
5. guidelines on what is and is not suitable for posting on a unit's account,
6. methods to limit indecent or obscene content on a unit's account, and
7. the personal use of social media by a police officer while on

duty.

By July 1, 2022, the bill requires each law enforcement unit to adopt and maintain a written policy that meets or exceeds the model policy's standards.

\*Senate Amendment "A" (1) removes the requirement that units adopt or amend a policy to establish general standards for the personal appearance of their officers while they are on duty and wearing a uniform or other authorized attire and (2) requires POST to develop a model social media policy for units and on-duty police officers.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

## **DEFINITIONS**

By law and under the bill, a "law enforcement unit" is any state or municipal agency or department (or tribal agency or department created and governed under a memorandum of agreement) whose primary functions include enforcing criminal or traffic laws; preserving public order; protecting life and property; or preventing, detecting, or investigating crime (CGS § 7-294a).

"Police officers" are sworn members of an organized local police department or the State Police; appointed constables who perform criminal law enforcement duties; special police officers appointed under law (e.g., those appointed to investigate public assistance fraud); or any members of a law enforcement unit who perform police duties (CGS § 7-294a).

"Social media" is an electronic medium where users may create and view user-generated content, such as uploaded or downloaded videos or photographs, blogs, video blogs, podcasts, or instant messages (CGS § 9-601).

## **COMMITTEE ACTION**

Public Safety and Security Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 23      Nay 2      (03/18/2021)

