



122 S.W. 7th Street
Topeka, KS 66603
Erik Smith, Superintendent

phone: 785-296-6800
fax: 785-296-5956
www.KansasHighwayPatrol.gov
Laura Kelly, Governor

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President Ty Masterson, Chairman
Legislative Coordinating Council
Kansas Statehouse
Topeka, Kansas 66612

Dear President Masterson:

Pursuant to K.S.A. 74-2105(b), the Kansas Highway Patrol (KHP) respectfully advises the Legislative Coordinating Council on the forthcoming changes to the Capitol Police described below.

The Capitol Police is a statutory function of the KHP (K.S.A. 75-4503), with duties that primarily entail the safety and security of the Capitol Complex. Law Enforcement Officers (LEOs) within the Capitol Police are distinct from Troopers in both job classification and uniform; however, they share many similarities. Both positions have identical hiring standards, statewide jurisdiction, and both currently undergo basic training at the KHP Training Academy (KHPTA) in Salina. Compensation is also alike. In 2022, the Legislature aligned LEO and Trooper career progression plans, ensuring that wages were equalized between comparable ranks.

KHP soon plans to reclassify employees serving as LEOs within the Capitol Police as Troopers. These newly reclassified Troopers would remain assigned to the Capitol Police. Their duties, classified status, and representation with the Kansas State Troopers Association would not change. The transition makes no change to the number of FTE positions, nor will the services provided by the Capitol Police change. The most significant change would simply be their position title and the color of their uniform.

This change is being made to address matters such as morale, discipline, recruitment, and retention within the Capitol Police. It standardizes the disciplinary process by evaluating all sworn members using the same criteria. It equalizes promotions and transfers, as the current system only allows for Capitol Police LEOs who graduated from the KHPTA to bid for Trooper positions. Troopers have no straightforward method of transferring into the Capitol Police. With pay parity, it has become difficult to attract LEOs to the Capitol Police once recruits understand Troopers are identically compensated but have greater opportunities for professional growth in positions throughout the State. We believe transitioning LEOs within the Capitol Police to Troopers will positively impact the agency for years to come.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide information on changes occurring to the Capitol Police. Please contact me at murl.riedel@ks.gov or 785-296-8082 if you have any questions.

Respectfully,

Murl Riedel, Chief of Staff
Kansas Highway Patrol